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THE

# WORKS

OF

# SAMUEL PARR, LL.D.

PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S, CURATE OF HATTON, &c.

WITH

## MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

AND

## A SELECTION FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE,

BY

JOHN JOHNSTONE, M. D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, AND OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON, &c.

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IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. VI.

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LONDON:

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1828.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

J. B. NICHOLS AND SON, 25, PARLIAMENT-STREET.

# CONTENTS OF VOLUME VI.


| Sermon. | | Page. |
|---|---|---|
| XXII. | Charity School Sermon . . . | 3 |
| XXIII. | Easter Sunday . . . . | 30 |
| XXIV. | On Steadfastness in the Work of the Lord . . . . . | 43 |
| XXV. | Consecration Sermon . . . | 69 |
| XXVI. | On the Sacrament . . . | 86 |
| XXVII. | Ditto . . . . . | 123 |
| XXVIII. | Ditto . . . . . | 157 |
| XXIX. | I came not to send Peace but a Sword | 183 |
| XXX. | Ditto . . . . . | 202 |
| XXXI. | Trinity Sunday . . . . | 234 |
| XXXII. | On the Love of Worldly Praise | 260 |
| XXXIII. | Ditto . . . . . | 276 |
| XXXIV. | Christ's Descent into Hell . | 305 |
| XXXV. | On Resolution . . . . | 322 |
| XXXVI. | On Private Prayer . . . | 344 |
| XXXVII. | The Two Commandments . | 356 |
| XXXVIII. | My Meat is to do the Will of God | 391 |
| XXXIX. | Ditto . . . . . | 427 |
| XL. | On Good Friday . . . | 449 |
| XLI. | On Benevolence . . . . | 466 |

| Sermon. | | Page. |
|---|---|---|
| XLII. | On Benevolence . . . . | 530 |
| XLIII. | Faith and Morals . . . | 592 |
| XLIV. | Ditto . . . . . | 615 |
| XLV. | Jubilee Sermon . . . . | 636 |
| XLVI. | On the Blessedness of those who hunger and thirst after Righteousness . | 665 |
| XLVII. | Live peaceably with all men . | 679 |

# SERMONS.

# SERMON XXII.*

CHARITY-SCHOOL SERMON.

## Acts xx. 35.

*Ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

To men of cultivated and enlarged understandings, who separate correctness from refinement, and piety from superstition, Christianity never appears with fuller lustre than when they compare the harmony that subsists between the speculative and the practical parts of it, and trace out the subserviency of both to the improvement and happiness of their species. In the speculative, we see a series of præternatural events employed to establish the credibility, and to exalt the dignity of a religion, the professed object of which is to make us the heirs of eternal life. In the practical, we meet with the most salutary directions and engaging persuasions for cherishing such sentiments as promote our temporal well-being, such as adorn our social state, and elevate to the highest perfection of which it is capable, our reasonable and our moral nature. In contending, however, for the

* July 1787.

truth of the Gospel, we think it not necessary to maintain, that it inculcates what was totally unknown; but we give no mean proof of its importance, if we shew that it teaches more exactly, and enforces more powerfully, what was already known —that it disentangles our duty from the misrepresentations of insidious sophistry, and purifies it from the adhesions of corrupt custom. Philosophy indeed has loosened the principles of that virtue which it seems to extol, and, in the pursuit of imaginary precision, has perplexed what is suggested by common sense, and explained away what is evinced by common experience. Thus, the indolence of one sect relaxes all the springs of vigorous and generous exertions in the human mind. The austerity of another blunts the tenderest feelings of the heart, and affects to dignify insensibility with the name of fortitude. A third would strip benevolence itself of all its moral properties, and resolve the suggestions of it into an indirect and lurking selfishness. Hence a revelation would have some claim to our attention and our gratitude, if it professed only to prevent the mischievous effects of such mistakes, and to bring men back to those habits of thought and action which nature prompts and which reason warrants. It betrays, therefore, a strange perverseness of judgment to represent the simplicity of the Gospel morality as a mark of an original merely human: and the complaint proceeds, I think, with singular impropriety from those who expatiate on the absurdity of its speculative doctrines, as [illegible] against its divine authority.

But was it necessary, you will ask me, for a revelation to be given, in order to tell you what you and others may learn from the unaided and uncorrupted exercise of your own minds? Perhaps not. But Christianity, you must remember, was vouchsafed for other purposes, and if it aims at this among the rest, where is the unfitness, for instance, of directing you to be charitable?—if mankind require to be persuaded as well as convinced, how can such a direction be called superfluous? For the Gospel being intended for the guidance of man, is suited to his condition and his nature. It conveys not to us any new faculties—it plants not within us any new affections; but directs us to the right use of those we already possess. But our better affections, as the slightest observation must shew, become feeble and uncertain from the predominance of the worst, and if religion, by controuling the irregularities of the one, facilitates and enlarges the operations of the other, it answers an end not unworthy of its omniscient Author. Hence every restraint tends to the safety of the individual, and every command to the welfare of the species. When, therefore, we are taught to think less respectfully and less gratefully of our religion because it inculcates those actions which are consistent with the dictates of our reason and our feelings, I should always consider this consistency as a presumptive proof, both of its truth and of its importance. And I should hope to confound the triumphs of infidelity, by stating the consequences of a contrary supposition; for if revelation had either explicitly commanded what reason

does not approve, or negligently taught what it does—if it had mentioned incidentally and coldly the love of our neighbour, we might then have found insuperable difficulties in establishing its evidences and complying with its mandates. Harrassed we have been by many a frivolous and many a petulant complaint, about the silence of the Gospel as to patriotism and friendship. And shall we be told in the same breath, that it bears no stamp of a divine original because it is *not* silent—nay, when it is very explicit and very copious as to acts of beneficence—when it recommends them warmly, and authoritatively commands them? But the insinuation, I thank God, is in both cases equally groundless. Be not surprised, my brethren, at the manner in which I take up my subject, and lament with me that I have occasion so to do. Well do I know the rapid transition by which the minds of men pass on from incredulity as to doctrines to contempt of precept. For when the understanding has been armed against the evidences of the one, the passions will quickly let us loose from the obligations of the other. I also know that we live in an age, when doctrines are hunted down by flippant raillery—that we live in a country where even precepts are refined away by what is called liberal accommodations—nay, that we live in a neighbourhood where paradoxes, which slowly undermine the authority, and openly assault the infallibility of the sacred writers, are varnished over with the prostituted title of rational Christianity; and under this imposing disguise are heard without indignation, are admitted without inquiry,

are propagated without shame, and, what is worse than all, are acted upon without fear. I have no wish to erect the honour of the Scriptures upon the usurpation of any exclusive or appropriate rights which reason can fairly maintain; and at the same time I have no ambition to rank with those philosophical believers who, under the specious pretext, shall I say, or for the romantic project of reconciling the no less philosophical scoffer to the Gospel, are ready—perhaps too ready—to recede from its ancient and solid claims.

The Apostle in the words of my text tells his disciples, that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and he endeavours to make the declaration more interesting and more useful to them by producing it as the command of their blessed Master. The proposition, no doubt, is plain and simple. It is illustrated by no elaborate reasoning, and decked out in no ostentatious rhetoric; it appealed, as all practical directions should do, to the common sense of those who heard it, and it was admitted, doubtless, as soon as it was pronounced. But shall we conclude from these circumstances that it was altogether unnecessary? Might it not be proper to *remind* those who did not stand in need of being informed? and did not the united authority of precept and example in the great Redeemer of mankind naturally tend to give the words of St. Paul greater weight and greater solemnity in the minds of those to whom they were addressed? Dull indeed must be the apprehension, and flinty must be the heart of that man, who can reflect without the tenderest

emotions on the circumstances in which the text was spoken, and the order in which it is arranged. St. Paul, with all the dignity and the pathos of the most perfect eloquence, is bidding adieu to the elders of the Ephesian Church. He recounts to them his toils, his bonds, and his afflictions—he warns them of the grievous wolves that would soon rush into the flock of Christ—he melts them into tears by telling them that they should see his face no more—he commends them to God Almighty's protection—he boldly asserts his own innocence in coveting no man's silver or gold—and then, after making the deepest impressions upon the sensibilities of his weeping hearers, in the close of all he holds up to them the lovely virtue of charity. "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive."

Now if to the precipitate and supercilious dogmatist, or the visionary and fastidious theorist, or the specious and perverse disputer of this world, the extreme plainness of the injunction should throw around it an appearance of something below the dignity of a divine teacher, it is in my power to silence such objections by a direct appeal to those writings, which are deservedly considered as the noblest productions of human wisdom. Why then, let me ask, did the most distinguished biographer of antiquity mention of Artaxerxes, that he used to say it was better to add to the possessions of others than to take from them for our own use?

Why did the most profound moralist of Greece admit the same proposition into his celebrated treatise of Ethics?—where he, almost in the very words of the Apostle, unfolds the principles upon which we give and receive, and investigates the consequences of each with his usual precision and perspicuity. Why also did the most philosophical historian of the same country think it worth his while to remark, that the Odrysians established a maxim diametrically opposite to that which prevailed among the Persians and the northern barbarians, in maintaining that it was better to receive than to give? or why does he lay open the sordid and savage policy on which this maxim was founded? or why does he stigmatize it in terms of the strongest reprobation? It is not, then, it cannot be a mark either of a trifling or a vulgar mind in St. Paul, to bring forward a position which Plutarch has recorded, which Aristotle has analyzed, and the reverse of which Thucydides has most justly and most pointedly condemned. The comparison, I ought to add, occurs frequently in profane authors, and it may not be unpleasing to men of taste, or useless to men of piety, for me to review the different manner in which the general idea is conveyed by different writers. Aristotle, in the stern and unadorned language of philosophy, says, that it is better to give than to receive. Epicurus, partly with a retrospect to that serenity of mind in which he placed the chief good, and partly from the suggestions of that courteous and humane disposition which pervaded his whole character, calls it more

*sweet.* But the Apostle speaks in a yet higher tone, when animated by all the brighter views of religion, he pronounces it more blessed.

In this sanctuary, I doubt not, you have often been told of the ardour with which Christianity directs its followers to be charitable, and I trust too, that you have listened to such representations with seriousness and improvement. I cannot however consider myself as speaking in vain, when I place the subject in a point of view somewhat different. Great respect is due to those who tell you what the Scriptures command, and perhaps you will think some share of attention is to be given to myself, when I vindicate the propriety of that command from impertinent and impious cavil.

In the spirit of cavil I might be told, that Jesus Christ was not the author of this maxim; but he found it—he approved of it—he adopted it, and he pressed it upon all his followers very frequently and very forcibly. I may also be told, that the express words do not occur in any part of the Gospels; and who ever supposed that these books contained all the instructions Jesus ever uttered, any more than, as St. John remarks, they record all the miracles he performed? But for the great purpose of making us wise unto salvation, they do contain whatever is necessary—they preserve to us the substantial and the essential parts of his religion—they place on the broadest and most sold basis the love of our fellow-creatures; and the text is in all respects worthy of our notice, whether we consider it as including the vital spirit of charity itself, or as congenial to the

benevolent temper of our blessed Master, or as adapted to the laudable purpose for which we are this day assembled.

Having thus endeavoured to shew the importance of Christianity in promoting the duty of charity, I might direct my thoughts to another quarter, and by explaining to you the sentiment of benevolence itself, upon which indeed the duty is founded, I might complete the defence of the Apostle's injunction; for the propriety of it would then be established, as well from the constitution of our nature as from the authority of our religion. But the time allotted to popular discourses will not permit me to lay before you some inquiries, which in consequence of being summoned hither as your preacher, I have made into this curious and interesting topic. Leaving therefore, but with reluctance, I acknowledge, those profound and abstract speculations, where philosophy illustrates what Christianity commands, I shall pursue the subject through a more beaten track; and for this purpose I shall first consider the pleasure which charity affords to him who gives; secondly, I shall state the obligations to it arising from the condition of those who receive; and thirdly, I shall point out the importance of it when employed in the cause of education, and especially for the benefit of such persons as are admitted into your school.

It was the fine observation of an ancient sage, that were a man placed in the highest heavens, whence he might contemplate the brightness and motion of the stars, and the glorious constitution of the universe,

he would yet derive no pleasure from a prospect so wide and so magnificent, unless there were some being to whom he could communicate it. This remark may be extended to all the means which Providence has bestowed upon us for the attainment of happiness; for, whatever those means may be, we know from experience that felicity is enjoyed only when it is imparted. To the pursuit of our own well-being we are pushed on by a strong and lively instinct; but the wisdom of our Maker has corrected the pernicious tendency of that instinct, by rendering the possession of every object unsatisfactory, unless in the use of it we look beyond ourselves. Hence intellectual attainments, unless communicated, excite no lasting admiration even of ourselves, because it is not reflected and confirmed by the admiration of others. They produce only a dark and sullen pride, which preys upon the peace of the possessor, which finds no vent in just complaints, and meets with no mitigation from sympathy. Power, if it be not employed for the protection of the weak and the encouragement of the worthy, torments the heart of him who is invested with it. In pleasure, the solitary gratification of our appetites is quickly succeeded by satiety and loathing. Even piety itself becomes languid, and wavering, and joyless, unless from the adoration of our Maker we proceed to imitate him in that attribute of benevolence which most nearly concerns our interest, and most powerfully attracts our love and veneration. But the pleasure which accompanies acts of charity is most exalted in itself, and at the same time forms a

decisive proof that God intended to make us happy in proportion as we are ourselves able and willing to promote the happines of others. This pleasure is instantaneous, and permanent, and certain. It begins even with the inclination to do good, it is increased at the very moment we are doing it, and it is recalled without any diminution of its force, or any alloy of its purity, by the slightest effort of recollection: it heightens the enjoyments of prosperity, as well as allays the sorrows of adverse fortune. In the bustle of active life it gives to us that importance, which no situation, however elevated, and no treasures, however inexhaustible, can bestow; and in the awful hours of solitude and reflection, it diffuses that tranquillity over the soul, which enables us to look back with comfort and forward with hope; it disperses much of the gloom which gathers around the mind upon a sight of the numberless evils that flesh is heir to; and it carries forward our views into those future stages of existence, in which our capacity of doing good will probably be enlarged, and in which we are conscious of being qualified for acting so distinguished a part by the sentiments we have indulged, and the habits we have formed in this more contracted sphere. The philosopher perceives the fitness and the beauty of benevolence, when he considers the dependence of man upon man, and when, by explaining the motives and ends of human actions, he discovers all the latent and the nicer springs, by which the selfish and the social affections are connected. The believer admits and admires the wisdom of that religious

dispensation which pronounces the love of God insincere and unacceptable, unless it be united with the love of man. But the researches of the one and the faith of the other, are far less efficacious in making us virtuous, and therefore happy, than one good action performed from a good motive. In reality, it is from experience only we can determine how blessed it is to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to inform the ignorant, or to reclaim the vicious; and safely may we assert, that by no other means can we challenge so large a share of regard from our fellow-creatures, or obtain, in an equal degree, the applauding testimony of our own conscience. The votaries of ambition, and wealth, and voluptuousness, are subject to many mortifying disappointments; and even in the possession of their favourite objects, they soon find either an oppressive lassitude of spirits, or a wild distraction of thought; they are cheered by no secret voice that whispers peace from within—they look up with no fond aspirings to the approbation of their Heavenly Judge. But the man who has endeavoured to alleviate the sufferings of his fellow-creatures, possesses advantages which the world cannot give, and which, amidst all its galling cares and all its frightful calamities, it cannot take away—he is conscious of having discharged the trust reposed in him with fidelity and with diligence. From the prosperity of others whom he has made prosperous, he extracts new felicity for himself, and even the evils of life are to him eventually an occasion of comfort, because he is ever disposed to remedy them.

It is no degradation, believe me, to the dignity of benevolence that, in the sight of God, those actions bear the highest value which call forth the warmest praise from the hearts and the tongues of men. On the contrary, it exalts our views of human nature itself, as well as facilitates our moral improvement, when we recollect that in the last day, the Redeemer of mankind will recompense every act of benevolence shewn to our fellow-creatures, as if immediately and deliberately shewn to himself. When therefore such is the present satisfaction and such are the future rewards of benevolence, you will not be indifferent about your own share in them. Placed as you are in a world so crowded with unavailing hopes, with excruciating fears, with dangers that cannot be seen, with calamities that cannot be escaped, you will endeavour to provide some shelter in the secret and sacred recesses of your own bosom, yielding, as the greater part of us too often may do, to our harsher affections, to the corrosions of envy, to the tumults of rage, to the throbs of offended pride, to the rankling of stifled resentment. You will try to make the cup of life less bitter by sometimes pouring into it the purer and sweeter drops of benevolence. Conscious as you are of infirmities and faults that subject you to the wrath of heaven, you will secure some portion of its favour by the exercise of that virtue which covers a multitude of sins; for, when you look back to the strange and diastrous events of this transitory being—when you reflect upon all the sorrows by which you have been yourselves afflicted, and all the temptation by which you have been overcome, the remembrance of charitable actions

will throw a calm over your alarmed and agitated minds, and inspire you with that hope, which a God of truth and mercy will not disappoint at the last.

I now proceed, in the second place, to state the obligations of charity arising from the condition of those who receive. The inequality of ranks that subsist among mankind multiplies the moral relations in which we stand to each other, and opens a wider field for the exercise of our benevolent affections. In a state of equality, indeed (could we suppose it to exist), there would be little room for reciprocal attachments or reciprocal services. Our worse affections might be dormant, but the better would not be extensively or eminently useful: we might give and receive assistance in repelling the attacks of wild beasts, or fencing off the inclemency of seasons; and even in this confined plan of action it would be found more blessed to give than to receive. Yet after these were attained, our intellectual powers and our social feelings would gradually languish for want of employment, and the arts which now adorn and sweeten human life would be disregarded, or rather unknown. But the inequality of men in a state of society give rise and permanence to those arts, and the effects of them are surely in a superior degree enjoyed by the powerful and the opulent. Hence arises the obligation for them to protect the poor and the industrious, and to lighten what are too often the unseen, and therefore the unpitied miseries to which men of inferior stations are exposed. We are told of a custom which prevailed in an eastern country, that upon the death

of a king all authority and laws were suspended for a few days, in order to impress the minds of the people with a just sense of the advantages to be derived from government. Now, if the exertions of those who, from motives of private interest, or even for self preservation, toil for the public weal, were to suffer any long interruption, the importance of the poor who constitute the majority of a state, would be widely felt, and they who now repose in indolence, or riot in luxury, would be made sensible of their obligations to the indigent and the laborious—to those whom in the giddy pride of station, or the mean insolence of wealth, they have looked down upon with scorn—to those whose craving wants they have neglected to supply, and whose piercing afflictions they have disdained to mitigate. Past, blessed be God, long past in these Christian countries, are those inauspicious days, when slavery bowed down the greater part of the community, and the trembling vassal crouched at the frown of his imperious lord. Something is now left to the husbandman and the manufacturer in the choice of their employments, and the degree of diligence that is exercised in them may, in some sense, be called voluntary, and even meritorious. But their toils procure our ease, their ingenuity and their diligence make us feel the advantages of superiority; and to the labours of the lowly cottage, the inhabitant of every stately palace is in some measure indebted for his gorgeous apparel and his sumptuous fare. Shall we not then give up some portion of our superfluities, and even of our conveniences for the sake of others?

The employments which are accessible to all ranks of the community furnish, in the general course of things, the means of their support—it is only in particular cases, and at particular seasons, that our benevolence can be extended to them. And who that compares the good he renounces with that he confers, will refuse to be benevolent? On the one hand you give up some petty convenience, some imaginary advantage, some trifling amusement, or, it may be, the means of some criminal gratification. On the other you pour balm into the wounded heart, or you ease a worthy family from a load of distress, or you snatch the young and the friendless from wickedness, from infamy, and from perdition.

But if this be the case, if it be so blessed to receive, how will you say can it be *more* blessed to give? The comparison may be thus explained—he that gives is, in general, possessed of a larger share of temporal advantages which, from the very circumstance of being imparted, are more valuable and more grateful; he indulges a habit which in every new exertion gives new pleasure, whereas he that receives, though the advantages of what he receives may be permanent, does not find in them equally a source of self-approbation. He that gives is conscious of a superiority, upon which, as it cherishes only self-respect, which terminates in self-provement, he may innocently, and even virtuously reflect; he that receives is subject at least to some pain from a sense of his own inferiority. He that gives cannot lose the merit of his gift; but he that

receives may fail in the use of it. Add to this that by the very frame and constitution of our minds, benevolence is a more agreeable sensation than gratitude; and even of gratitude itself it deserves to be remarked that the pleasure as well as the merit of it is most complete, when it makes the nearest approaches to benevolence. We rejoice, for instance, at the good fortune of those by whom we are benefited; but the measure of our joy is not full, unless we had ourselves some share in promoting it, that is, unless to the satisfaction of those who receive we add the triumphs of those who give.

Here indeed I may be checked by an objection which it is worth while to remove, not because it is often urged by men of wisdom, or because it much influences men of virtue, but because in cases where institutions depend on voluntary subscription it may mislead the unwary and irritate the capricious, and because it is most treacherously and most despitefully employed to depreciate the charity of others, by those who have neither the courage to acknowledge, nor the ability to defend their own insensibility. The poor, I may be told, are not always thankful to their benefactors, and deprive you, in part at least, of the promise which the apostle holds out, when he pronounces it more blessed to give than to receive. Alas! the expectations we form of returns from those upon whom we have conferred obligations, are not always reasonable or always generous; and sure I am, that accusations of this kind would not be so often alleged, if we balanced the gratitude of some against the ingratitude of others. We

should be yet less inclined to insist upon them, if we considered that the best fruits of our labour and our love are to be seen in the conduct and the well-being of those to whom we give; for to a contemplative mind, to a feeling heart, what recompence, I would ask, can be afforded more glorious than this? I mean, that all the virtues which the objects of our kindness are able to practise, all the misery which they avoid, all the comforts which they enjoy, are to be ascribed to our anxious concern for their good morals and for their welfare. He that can survey such a prospect with coldness or with disgust, because his vanity is not gratified by obsequious or ostentatious acknowledgments of favours received, may with reason suspect the rectitude of his own motives. He understands not the dignity of true benevolence, or the genuine purity of Christian charity; and to a character so abject, and so contemptible, it were mockery, I confess, to apply the words of my text, that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

The merit of human actions depends after all upon the intention of the agent, and if we are still obdurate enough to make the presumed unthankfulness of others a plea for our own determined unkindness, the futility of such a plea is to be exposed not by subtle and circuitous reasonings, but by splendid and prominent examples. We read then of a heathen philosopher, who, being tasked and taunted for relieving an unworthy object, blunted the edge of the reproach by this memorable answer, "I gave my kindness not to the man but to humanity itself." We read what is yet more instructive to us in sacred

history, that the blessed Redeemer of the world went about doing good, not less to those who persecuted than to those who believed on him. We are taught by Revelation, and we know too by experience that, through the bounty of our common father, the rains descend and the sun shines upon the unjust as well as the just. Mistake me not, I am far from wishing to encroach upon the right you have to the regard of those whom you may have succoured in their distress. I consider the thankfulness of him who receives, as a part of the recompence assigned to him who gives. But it constitutes not the greater or the better part; and in the moment when you follow the emotions of benevolence, the expectation of gratitude seldom prompts any particular act, however it may have strengthened the general habit by previous reflection. The sight of misery, which it is in your power to relieve, begets instantaneously and instinctively an inclination to relieve it. The indulgence of that inclination is accompanied by a delightful approbation of the moral sense, and if the affection you bear to your fellow-creatures is invigorated by a consciousness of the duty which you owe to your Creator, the action itself assumes a higher importance, and the performance of it is productive of a more sublime and rapturous pleasure. You then feel it as a splendid distinction of your moral agency, that it enables you to co-operate with an all-wise and gracious Deity in communicating felicity to these best and fairest works of his hands—to those whom he has made in his own image—to dependant beings who in common with yourselvesare the objects of his provi dential care—

to redeemed creatures whom he has destined for immortal life. In this just and comprehensive view of things, the importance of benevolent acts will not appear inconsiderable, though bestowed upon the humblest of your species. And when you reflect that Jesus Christ has distinguished by peculiar marks of affection the innocent and young, or that your heavenly Father has graciously described himself under the character of a friend to the poor and the needy, you will exult surely in the consciousness of imitating such examples—you will scarcely wait for the impulses of a command to be charitable—you will love and practise charity, as being in itself a source of the purest and most exquisite enjoyment.

I shall now in the last place point out the importance of charity when employed in the cause of education, and especially for the benefit of such persons as are admitted into your school. Many are the complaints which are now circulated concerning the sloth and the profligacy of the poor. I have myself bestowed no small share of attention upon the grounds, and let me not forget to say upon the motives, of these complaints. The fact I admit and deplore, but in ascertaining the cause much is to be laid to the account of example in the higher ranks of the community; for it is always an easier task to reprove others than to amend ourselves. Something is also to be charged upon our insensibility, or at least our indifference; for our arms are strengthened by the authority of law, and we think it a speedier and less irksome expedient to crush the criminal, than to employ our time

and our money in the prevention of crimes. It was the institution of a very humane and enlightened people that a father, who had neglected to bring up his child to any honest employment, should not be permitted to receive from that child any offices of filial duty, when he was himself overtaken by the pains and infirmities of old age. Let us apply the principles of this institution to ourselves. The effects of industry, sobriety, and good order in the lower ranks ascend to the higher, and procure for us many of those external advantages, the alleged insecurity of which gives rise to our accusations against the poor. But what *right* have we to partake of those good effects, if we have not employed the means which Providence has given us for cherishing their growth? What reason have we to expect that the unlettered part of the community should control the natural turbulence of their passions—should submit to the hard circumstances of their lot—should practise all the salutary, and in them, let me say, the arduous virtues of patience, of temperance, and diligence, unless we teach them the importance of what they are to practise—unless we qualify them to become good citizens by instruction and exhortation—unless we encourage them to be so by protection and praise? Instead, therefore, of multiplying the clamours of reproach, which are already loud enough, or the restraints of punishment, which by wise and good men have long been suspected of being too indiscriminate and too severe, we should be better employed in making the experiment at least, of a virtuous education; and though the effect should not be correspondent to our

sanguine and generous wishes, it will be sufficient to warrant our well meant and well-directed endeavours; it will shorten the catalogue of human crimes and human woes; it will lead many of our poor Christian brethren into habits of sobriety and decency, and obedience to the laws; it will enable some to pass through life with a tolerable share of comfort; it will rescue others from the dreadful extremities of inveterate incorrigible wickedness, and of helpless hopeless ruin.

Here indeed appears the peculiar excellence of the charity you patronize, because it tends to *prevent* many of the flagrant vices, and many of the severe afflictions to which the inferior orders of society lie open. But I will not pursue this subject at length, especially, as my sincere and serious thoughts upon it have already been twice submitted to the judgment of a discerning, and I have reason to add, an attentive publick.

If, however, you would calculate fully the importance of the services you are now rendering, you have only to reflect upon the probable consequences of not having rendered them. They who by your means have been formed into virtuous and useful members of the commonwealth, might have degenerated into opposite characters. You might have seen them pining with hunger, or shivering with cold, or agonizing under sharp and yet lingering diseases, the sad companions and unrelenting avengers of laziness, intemperance, and lust. If your compassion had then been awakened, it might have been exercised too late to have produced any

lasting effect—if your admonitions had then been employed, they might have been employed in vain.

However this discourse may have exceeded the usual limits, I cannot close it without marking two circumstances in the situation of these children which press strongly upon my mind; and which therefore I shall take the liberty of pointing out, not for your information but for your encouragement. Now our compassion, it is well known, acquires new tenderness and new activity from the consideration of their sex, which, indeed, has in all civilized countries been thought entitled to an extraordinary degree of protection, and which is not generally treated with cruelty and rudeness, except in periods of the coarsest ignorance and most brutal barbarism. So strong indeed were the impressions which female weakness and female innocence formerly made upon the Roman legislators, that upon the death of their parents proper persons were provided by the laws to guard that weakness, and to watch over that innocence. Similar, in spirit at least, is the care you take for the education of these little ones, and scarcely inferior in kind or degree are the advantages they derive from that care. In our country many seminaries are established for the instruction of boys; but for reasons which at present need not be enumerated, fewer provisions are made for the other sex. I must however in candour hope, that their want of importance in society will not be urged as a plea for that neglect, which it is vain to dissemble. In the higher walks of life they sweeten the charming

hours of domestic privacy—they provide repose for men whose tempers have been ruffled, and whose passions are agitated in the tumultuous struggles of ambition. They soften the native ruggedness and ferocity of our own masculine character—they cultivate many elegant arts with brilliant success; and they have given rise not only to the polish of exterior manners, but to that inward delicacy of sentiment which sometimes supplies the place of benevolence, and sometimes sheds a new lustre upon its noblest exertions. In the more humble stations, they contribute largely to the improvement of the community, and to the general stock of happiness, which social life in all its various forms can afford. Unfit as they may be for rougher employments, they have their share in some departments of the most laborious and most lucrative arts. Even in their menial capacities they produce many of those comforts and conveniences which bind us by the fondest attachments to our private families; they have habits of cleanliness, of sobriety, and obedience which often are not to be found among men of the same condition. They may also set up a very peculiar claim to our constant and even affectionate regard, if we consider, that through the successive stages of our existence, from the cradle to the grave, we experience the effects of their softer sensibilities and their minuter cares. Were we not cherished by them while, in a state of helpless infancy, we as yet were hanging upon our mothers' breasts? When we are drooping with faintness, or tossed with anguish on the bed of sickness, do not

their unremitted watchings, their anxious attentions, their little nameless, but most soothing and most endearing offices compose our troubled spirits, and refresh our wearied limbs? Even in our last aweful moments, when every other resource has failed us, the terrors of impending death are in some degree assuaged by their tender assiduities and their sympathetic tears. Such are the services which even these humblest objects of your charity may hereafter be called upon to perform—to yourselves it may be, or to your children; and their ability to perform them well must be much increased if, through your liberality and under your directions, they are trained up in diligence, in honesty, and in the fear of the Lord.

The last circumstance I shall mention is to be found in their age. At the time when they enter into the lowest class of your school they are susceptible of many good impressions—they are beginning to draw off their blind and vagrant curiosity from mere trifles—their reason is sufficiently ripened to comprehend such plain instructions as you have provided for them. If from the unfeeling negligence or the vicious examples of their parents they have contracted any moral contagion, there is time surely to apply every proper and efficacious remedy. If they come with any wrong propensities of their own, such I mean as are generally ascribed to our natural disposition, but are really the produce of habits very early begun and insensibly increased, they will find in your school more effectual checks than their own families

would have supplied. The dread of punishment, a sense of shame, the good instructions which they hear, the good examples which they see—all these are at hand to subdue the fierceness of their tempers, and to correct the obliquity of their principles. Should they be fortunate enough to bring with them a better turn of mind, or a greater portion of talents, they will here meet with many opportunities for strengthening the one and for improving the other. Their good behaviour will not pass altogether unnoticed; and to behave well many of them will be solicitous, as they are often summoned, to stand in the presence of superiors whom it may be their pride to please, and of benefactors whom it is their duty to obey. These advantages extend through all the intermediate stages of education, and they act with yet greater force in the close of it, when they are called up to more difficult employments, which are happily recommended to them, not only from their intrinsic utility, but because the permission to engage in them is a sort of distinction and favour conferred upon them for their former conduct. At this period they are qualified, I understand, more immediately for domestic stations; and if they make a right use of your institution, they will be prepared to act a better part in society, whether they be employed as servants, or engaged in some of the labours connected with trade, or rise, in consequence of their probity and industry, to the more honourable and useful offices which belong to mistresses of families. Their time of life, God knows, is then most critical indeed;

for they are beset by numberless temptations and numberless dangers — by temptations which the young and the unwary often do not resist; and by dangers which they cannot always foresee or avert. But the task you allot them calls them aside, for a season at least, from the solicitations of the seducer; and the instructions you give them may hereafter fortify their minds against the violence of their own passions. He indeed that, with a truly philosophical or a truly religious spirit, reflects upon the perils or the disasters to which young women are exposed—upon the snares which surround their innocence—upon the disgrace which pursues their indiscretion—upon the poverty, the distresses, and the diseases which overtake them in the short career of their vices—such a man in the first moment of reflection upon such a subject, will find himself either oppressed with the deepest melancholy, or racked with the keenest anguish. But the sorrows of his heart will find some relief in the tendency of your wise and good Institution. When he considers the advantages of it to these friendless females, he will adore the goodness of God in permitting them to *receive*. But when he looks back upon himself as the appointed instrument of preventing such alarming offences and such complicated miseries, he will exult with honest joy in this exercise of charity—he will assent with unshaken confidence to the words of the Lord Jesus—he will experimentally feel and acknowledge that it is most blessed *to give*.

# SERMON XXIII.

EASTER SUNDAY.

## 2 Tim. i. 10.

*Who hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.*

Whatsoever modifications any opinion may undergo from oral tradition, from popular theology, from the fictions of poets, or the researches of philosophers, the universality of its reception is generally considered as a decisive proof that it rests upon some principle natural to the mind of man. The force of this observation is admitted by many able writers who, from the very diversity of sentiments which has prevailed about the nature, or the attributes, or the designs, or the works of God, have, by legitimate inference, drawn some degree of additional evidence from his existence.

The laws of analogical reasoning will justify us in applying the same argument to the belief of a future life; and in point of fact, wheresoever the being of a Deity is acknowledged, some indistinct notions of our responsibility to him as moral agents have also been observed. In all countries, whether

barbarous or civilized, the hopes and fears of men have carried their views beyond the grave, and the various ceremonies, which have been practised in honour of the dead, appear to have been accompanied by a secret and soothing conviction, that the objects to whom those honours were paid, have passed into some other state of being. It is, indeed, of importance to us to remark, that even those philosophical sects, who employed their ingenuity against the doctrine of a life to come, found it necessary, for the purpose of consistency, to controvert the existence of a Deity, or at least to maintain, that no moral government was administered by him, and consequently that there were no intelligible grounds for the expectation of punishments and rewards, adapted to the antecedent conduct of his creatures.

If the feelings and judgments of all mankind in different states of civilization, of laws, of science, and religion, lead them to reflect on these subjects; and if some degree of uncertainty accompanies those reflections, in the enlightened sage and the untutored peasant, surely a presumption arises, that a divine revelation, though communicated as it must unavoidably be with some properties different from the ordinary course of God's providence, would have a direct tendency to diminish that uncertainty. Now the revelation given, as we hold, to Moses, asserted the existence and unity of God. The revelation granted to us in the Gospel of Christ asserts the reality of a future life. The arguments by which the credibility of either of these revelations

as such, is supported, however convincing to ourselves, may not be equally satisfactory to every inquirer. But upon the strictest principles of philosophy every inquirer must admit, à priori, that a revelation upon either point is desirable; he must admit that, if for the purpose of encouraging virtue and diffusing happiness among his rational creatures, a righteous and benevolent Being were to employ such a revelation, the very act of employing it would, in our apprehension, be an additional instance of his righteousness and his benevolence. The circumstances with which any religion professing to come from above is accompanied—the ends to which it seems to be subservient—the doctrines it teaches—and the conduct of the persons by whom they are taught, as means adapted to the attainment of that end, must upon all general principles of reasoning be very important criteria for a serious and impartial examiner to decide upon its pretensions to general reception. Keeping those principles in view when we investigate the particular claims of Christianity, and appealing unequivocally to those criteria, we may with great propriety adopt, and we may with great success defend, the declaration of the Apostle, that God hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

Whatsoever influence the subtleties and refinements of philosophical sects may have had upon the minds of contemplative men in their closets, they have never been found of sufficient efficacy to produce any general belief, or to destroy that desire of renovated existence—that dread of chastise-

ment for evil actions—that solicitude for recompense to virtuous habits, which seems to have been instinctively implanted in the human heart.

But upon this, as well as upon many other subjects connected with religion, the inconsistency of mankind will not produce any lasting emotions of surprise in those observers who have remarked the latent and baneful influence of early prepossession. When the resurrection taught by Christianity was propounded to the Jews, they rejected it, not because they had a settled and indiscriminate disbelief of futurity, but because the great Author of our faith, in opening the purposes for which he was sent upon earth, gave no countenance to such wild and fantastic notions as they entertained of that temporal kingdom, the arrival of which they considered as an event inseparably connected with the coming of the promised Messiah. When St. Paul told the Athenians that the dead should be raised, the doctrine of a futurity was presented to them in a form far different from that in which they had been accustomed to contemplate it, whether as incorporated with the national religion, or as illustrated by philosophical investigation. It is indeed a melancholy instance of the infatuation to which the human mind may, in some circumstances, be degraded, when we read, that even so enlightened a people as the Athenians looked upon St. Paul as an idle babbler—that Jesus appeared to them in his preaching a new God—and that even the resurrection for which he contended, only as a fact, was invested by his hearers with personality, and derided

as being a goddess in the very estimation and even language of the Apostle himself. Strange and unfounded as was this misconception, the greater part of the Athenians still retained their faith in a future state; and the cause of their objection to the preaching of St. Paul, was not merely that he employed new terms for his doctrine, but that he rested it upon evidence which, to their understandings, was new, and therefore incredible.

We, whose views upon the moral government of God are more enlarged and more correct than those of the Heathen world, discover a singular and direct propriety in the peculiarities of that proof, upon which the Apostle lays claim to our assent. We admit in common with past ages the force of that evidence, which is found in the hopes and fears of nearly all mankind—found in the readiness of our fellow-creatures to embrace popular tradition, political descriptions, historical narratives, and theological dogmas, as tending to confirm those hopes and those fears — found in the strong presumptions which the unequal distributions of happiness and misery in this life suggest for the probability of another state, in which that inequality will be corrected —found in those circuitous and abstract reasonings which many sages have employed, when they contended that the immateriality of the soul amounted almost to a demonstration of its imperishable and therefore immortal nature. But we are not content to place our belief upon those foundations alone. We are not satisfied even with maintaining that the views which Christianity exhibits of a life

to come, are correspondent with the clearest notions which we can ourselves form of justice, holiness, and mercy, as divine attributes, and I add far more correspondent than the sentiments which the founders of ancient religion, or the teachers of ancient philosophy, are known to have entertained. We justly contend that a religion professing to be sent from heaven, and accompanied by signs and wonders in the teachers of it, constitutes a more direct and a more decisive proof, than in the very nature of things can be furnished from any other quarter in which human reason is the professed and sole guide of human opinion. Appealing to the records of Holy Writ, we go one step farther; we hold that a peculiar and most convincing evidence of our own resurrection has been supplied to us by an intelligible and well-established fact, by that resurrection of Christ himself, which he had repeatedly predicted, and to which his followers again and again appealed, acknowledging at the same time, that if Christ be not risen from the dead, the whole fabric of their religion would be overthrown, and their faith completely vain.

Thus we see both the propriety and importance of the proposition contained in my text, that life and immortality are brought to light through the Gospel; and here you will permit me to observe, that in common with several divines of our Church eminently distinguished by their learning and their piety, I consider the original word, which has been translated "brought to light," as implying, that the Gospel enlightened, i. e. poured fresh light upon

the doctrines of life and immortality—that to the imperfect knowledge which the Jews and Heathens had upon the subject, he had supplied additional and more perfect knowledge—that it has cleared up what was doubtful—that it has rectified what was erroneous—that it has confirmed what was rational, and enforced what was important.

Such a fact, supported by such testimony as can be adduced in support of it, finds a straight and a smooth path to our common sense. It stands clear from all those adhesions of doubt, and even disgust which every well-informed and well-regulated mind cannot fail to experience, when a truth so momentous is disfigured by the concomitant absurdities of mythology, and the concomitant impurities of polytheism. It is not attended by those secret misgivings which some of the wisest and best of men in the Heathen world confessedly suffered when they brooded over the indistinct and gloomy reflections of their own minds, after perusing with admiration and transient assent those writings of Plato, in which a future life is not only defended by ingenious reasonings, but embellished with the most captivating eloquence. It leaves no room for the distrust we feel in the conscious imbecility of the human understanding, when it has been engaged in discussions upon the absolute or comparative properties of matter and spirit, and when in the progres of the mind from remote premises to a final conclusion, there is a possibility of some errors in the assumption or application of leading principles—a possibility of some irregularity in our intellectual

process—a possibility of some failure in the memory or some aberration in the judgment, when the more or fewer, the direct or indirect, the luminous or obscure relations of dissimilar and disparate parts to a complicated whole, were the subjects of our contemplation.

But that Jesus rose from the dead is a fact of which they who had seen him before he died, and saw him again when he was risen, were competent witnesses—that he died upon the cross—that he lay in the grave for three days—that, after having risen from the grave, he conversed with different disciples at different times, and bade them behold his hands and his feet—that he said to Thomas, reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side—that after these preparatory and decisive proofs of his resurrection, he expounded the Scriptures—that he a third time shewed himself to his disciples—and that finally he was seen by five hundred brethren at once—these surely are at least very intelligible propositions, and as the credibility of those who bore testimony to such facts, has been supported by trains of the clearest and fairest reasonings on the character and situation of the witnesses, on the plainness and consistency of their narrative, on the absence of every criminal temptation to misinterpret, on the concurrence of every favourable opportunity for them to understand what they related, on their renunciation of all wordly advantages, and their endurance of reproach, captivity, and death itself, in contending for the faith, we may confi-

dently affirm, that upon life and immortality the very fullest light has been shed by the Gospel of our blessed Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

To the attempt which I have thus made to vindicate the assertion of the Apostle, let me add one consideration, which may serve to elucidate it. We have seen that the proofs supplied by Christianity are more satisfactory than any other arguments suggested to human reason by reflection upon the general constitution of the world, and the general belief of mankind. But well does it become us to remember one striking and appropriate circumstance, which some able defenders of religion have pointed out. True it is that our understandings by their own unaided operation, conduct us to the belief of a future state, and of a state too, in which rewards finite in degree or duration may be assigned to men, who have endeavoured to obey the will of their Maker—such conclusions are directly in favour of a life to come. But the peculiar excellence of our religion is, that it propounds to us the doctrine of immortality; and surely while the arguments of futurity are drawn only from the limited merits of such moral agents as we are, those merits, however great, supply no proof which, according to our clearest perceptions of proportion, can warrant the smallest expectation of *eternal* reward. So correct and so interesting is the declaration of the Sacred Writers that everlasting life is to be considered as the spontaneous gift of God, through Christ. In the minds of many contemplative and serious men, doubts have sometimes arisen upon the eternity of

punishment, and much criticism has been employed upon the signification of the term in which that opinion is thought by some, and denied by others to have been conveyed. But upon a state of immortal happiness all parties are agreed, all admit that such a state has been announced to us in the Gospel. All have allowed the precise and definite signification of the words incorruptible and immortal. We must all in our most serious moments have been struck with the perspicuity, the ardour, the eloquence of the sacred writers, when they describe to us the covenanted benevolence of God in that purpose which his infinite goodness had formed, and which his blessed son has announced, of granting felicity to his redeemed creatures for ever and for ever.

Let us however not forget, that in the ordinary and extraordinary dispensations of the Deity there exists that perfect consistency which philosophers by conjecture, and the teachers of revelation by warrant from above, ascribe to a moral governor of the world. Let us consider that God is not only a benevolent, but a righteous Being—that by an unalterable law he has united virtue in his creatures with happiness; and that while much is given to us beyond our deserts, much is also required of us, by the performance of which we can to some extent deserve. If there be treasured up for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, an unfading crown, an incorruptible inheritance, vain will it be for us to expect them as a gift, if we neglect that moral discipline of our hearts, by which they will in some

respects become a reward. The joys of heaven, you will observe, are assigned, not arbitarily, not unconditionally, not promiscuously, but to the spirits of just men made perfect—to moral agents, who have endeavoured to qualify themselves for the company of apostles and martyrs, of angels and archangels, and the glorified Mediator of the new covenant. The promise of those joys must excite our gratitude, and gratitude must manifest its sincerity and its efficacy by animating our efforts to obey the will of God. Doubtless, with such bright prospects as have been opened to us, we must learn to raise our affections from all earthly objects, and to set them upon those which are heavenly. We must encourage ourselves and others in well doing, not merely by professing to believe, but by acting as men who sincerely do believe that they are to live for ever in the kingdom of their Redeemer.

The body in which we are now invested is liable to be maimed or crushed by outward accidents—to be destroyed by acute or sudden disease—to be wasted by slow and lingering sickness, or dissolved by the gentle, but inevitable and progressive decays of old age. But upon the change, which, as accountable beings, and therefore conscious of previous merit or demerit in a previous mode of existence we are to undergo, the declarations of Scripture, when general are literal, and when particular are figurative. They indeed set before us no abstruse, or contentious, or ostentatious phraseology of metaphysics—no mystical traditions of mythology—no illusory visions of fanaticism—no som-

brous colourings of superstition—no glowing exaggeration or arbitrary invention, admitted, and indeed admissible only, in the boundless and trackless range of poetical imagery. They bear not the smallest resemblance to those opinions which, descending from remote antiquity, and variously modified by allegorical interpretation or philosophical refinements, were retained among the Greeks and Romans in their most polished ages, or those which prevailed among the ruder inhabitants of Northern Europe, or those which delighted the vivid fancy of many oriental authors. Destitute of the artificial decorations which human ingenuity has bestowed upon subjects most interesting to the human mind, whether in barbarous or civilized countries, they are adapted to the more salutary purpose of influencing our conduct—they are sufficiently perspicuous to direct our faith—sufficiently definite to animate our hope, and sufficiently authoritative to leave us no plea for our deliberate disobedience.

That, as we learn from St. Paul, which is sown in dishonour will be raised in glory, and that which is sown in weakness will be raised in power. This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Thankful, therefore, let us be to God, who hath thus given us the victory over death and the grave, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be steadfast, my beloved brethren, let us be immoveable — let us always be abounding in good works, forasmuch as we know that our labour will not be in vain. If Christ being

raised from the dead dieth no more, let us so walk in newness of life, that when he who is our Saviour shall summon us to his tribunal as our Judge, we may appear before him in glory, and dwell together with him in the presence of God and the Father through endless ages.

# SERMON XXIV.*

ON STEADFASTNESS IN THE WORK OF THE LORD.

## 1 Corinth. xv. 58.

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

In some preceding parts of the chapter whence my text is taken, the Apostle establishes the doctrine of a future state with such force of reasoning, and such copiousness of illustration, as have ever commanded attention from the intelligent and the pious. He first insists upon the fact of our Lord's resurrection from the grave. On this event he founds a clear and irresistible argument in favour of the general resurrection, and in metaphorical terms taken from the customs, opinions, and familiar idioms of his Jewish countrymen, he shews that the ascent of Christ from the grave prefigured our own. He then refutes all the cavils which popular superstition, or specious sophistry, might

* April 1800.

suggest upon the manner in which the dead are raised up. In the ardour of a mind enraptured with the grandeur, and expanding with the magnitude, of the topics that were before him, he pushes on from statement to deduction, from deduction to analogy, and from analogy to luminous and animated description. In a noble strain of exultation, he exclaims, "Death is swallowed up in victory;" or, as the words have been more properly understood by some learned critics, and pertinently explained by corresponding passages in the Septuagint — "Death is swallowed up *for ever*." With the eagerness of a writer who felt unfeignedly what he taught authoritatively, he seizes, as indeed he often does upon other occasions, the accessory idea conveyed by that expression — "O Death," says he, "where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" He contends that the Gospel, giving us the victory through Christ, is an object more worthy of our gratitude and admiration than the Law, which was the strength of sin, and of that sin which was the sting of death. Having thus elicited the point upon which our fondest hopes and most precious interests depend, he immediately makes an application of the doctrine highly instructive. He exhorts the Corinthians to steady perseverance in the faith of a Redeemer, who had perished indeed upon the cross, but who, by the extraordinary dispensation of God, had triumphed over death. He encourages them to abound, or "excel,"* in all the

* Pearce.

graces which adorn the Christian character, not by plausible and ostentatious harangues on the mere abstract beauty of virtue—not by dark and abstruse researches into the essence of the human soul,—not by circuitous and intricate deduction from the moral probabilities of a future existence, — but by the direct, the intelligible, the most important consideration, that no attempt they made to obtain the favour of God could fail of producing an adequate effect. Because Christ had risen from the dead,—because he had become the first-fruits to them that slept,—because this corruptible must put on incorruption,—because God has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ — therefore the Corinthians are instructed, not merely to practise good works, but to abound in them. They are to abound, not casually and with interruptions, but always. They are represented as having, not a faint and vague expectation, but a distinct and settled knowledge, that their labour would not be in vain. And why? Inasmuch as they were performing the works of the Lord in obedience to the Lord's commands, and therefore from the justice and the covenanted mercy of the Lord they were to look for ultimate and plenary retribution. There, then, you see the close connection of the text with the foregoing contents of the chapter, and the immediate tendency it has to enforce what the Apostle had argued with so much earnestness and so much strength, and illustrated by so many analogies.

As the text contains two directions, one for ad-

herence to a religious doctrine, and another for proficiency in religious practice, I shall divide the remainder of this discourse in the following manner: First, I shall lay before you my own judgment upon the peculiar phraseology which St. Paul has employed in the opening of the verse; secondly, I shall recommend steadfastness in performing the works of the Lord; and, thirdly, I shall enforce the duty of abounding in them always.

The scenery to which any people are accustomed, in the productions of nature or in the works of art, will considerably affect their compositions. Hence, as the city of Athens stood near the sea, and as the inhabitants were not only engaged in commerce, but claimed a sort of maritime dominion among the neighbouring states, their dramatic works abound with nautical metaphors, which were doubtless very intelligible and very striking to their popular assemblies. In conformity to the same principle, St. Paul again and again makes use of such allusions to local circumstances as were most likely to captivate the imagination and to interest the feelings of the persons whom he wished to instruct. Your piety will be invigorated, while your curiosity, perhaps, may be gratified by the enumeration of some instances. The inhabitants of Ephesus considered the Temple of Diana as the glory of their country; and therefore, in addressing the Ephesians, the Apostle draws much of his imagery from architecture. At Corinth, the Isthmian games were celebrated every third, or, as some contend, every fifth year; and

such was the importance attached to them, that when the city had been destroyed by a Roman general, the privilege of conducting those games was consigned to a neighbouring state, till Corinth was rebuilt, and could resume the management of them. Every reader of discernment, therefore, must admit the propriety and energy of the reference which the Apostle makes to those games when he is writing to the Corinthians; and who shall be tasteless or perverse enough to maintain that the eloquence of a Christian teacher is debased by a species of rhetoric which the noblest orators of antiquity did not disdain to employ. Thus the Athenians are reproved, by one of them, for want of foresight and want of dexterity in those measures which resembled not the skilfulness of a disciplined champion of Greece, who anticipated the blow, but the clumsiness of a barbarian, who received it, and suffered his attention wildly and ineffectually to follow the antagonist, whose attack he ought to have prevented steadily and vigorously. Again: the policy of a nation lying in wait till the strength of their neighbours was exhausted, and reserving their own to decide the contest, is happily denoted by an expression taken from the wrestler, whose lot was so fortunate as to leave him disengaged while others were contending, and to struggle with the conqueror, already wearied in the conflict with a former adversary. These instances, then, elucidate the fitness and the dignity of St. Paul's writings, in his allusions to the athletic art when he wrote to the

Corinthians. In the chapter of my text, he tells us that we shall all be changed at the last trump; and in order to impress the image more strongly, he adds, "for the trumpet shall sound." And forcible, indeed, must have been this language to the Corinthian reader, who would recollect that, during the celebration of the games in his own country, he had seen the chariot rush from the gaol upon the signal of the trumpet. Thus, too, in the words of my text, St. Paul, first having used the word victory, sustains the imagery in the next sentence by referring to that firmness and activity in wrestlers —to be steadfast and unmoveable; and, perhaps, to those who are acquainted with the learned languages, there is scarcely any example of the general principle, which I have been unfolding to you, more judicious or more impressive than the metaphor in this part of the text.

But farther, you will permit me to point out what I think a material distinction between the different parts of the verse. So far, then, as I can gather from the general import of the context, and the emphatical signification of the original words, St. Paul seems to have had in view the regulation of opinion only, when he advises the Corinthians to be steadfast and unmoveable. Just as in a foregoing verse, where the translation says, "awake to righteousness, and sin not," the sense, when compared with some passages which precede and others which follow, seems to be—recover from sottish delusion to a real and genuine sobriety of mind,

and err not with those who would destroy your belief in the resurrection of the dead. The first word, ἑδραῖοι has been successfully rendered *steadfast*, but the entire and appropriate sense of ἀμετακίνητοι neither has been, nor, according to the genius of the English tongue, can be conveyed by one term; for the privative particle at the beginning of the word, which our English Testament does translate, is followed by a preposition signifying transition, which it does not translate. The opposite conduct of the first consists in that imbecillity which subjects us to the guilt of swerving from the truth at all; but the opposite of the second implies that lubricity and versatility which subjects us to the yet greater guilt of suffering our minds to be pushed by various external impulses, and with various directions. Now St. Paul was well aware that his Corinthian converts were surrounded by the delusions of the Epicurean philosophy, the advocates of which were ever ready to ensnare the credulous and to harden the profane, and the tenets of which not only obscured, but quite extinguished every hope of futurity. He therefore instructs them to be seated, as it were, firmly in the momentous doctrine which he had been maintaining about the resurrection of Christ, and, through Christ, of the dead. He further warns them against that airy gaiety, which rambles from one tenet to another without the toil of regular inquiry, or the pangs of conscious inconsistency—against that restless curiosity, which, vibrating at one moment towards the levity of scepticism, and recoiling at the next to-

wards the haughtiness of dogmatism, finds in mere novelty the most powerful allurements to precipitate and fleeting conviction — against that extravagant presumption, which, affecting to scan the counsels of omniscience, would abandon sober reason in chace of plausible conjecture, and oppose the subtleties of disputation to the testimony of facts.

But to the artifices by which the Corinthians might have been decoyed into dangerous errors, you, I trust, are not exposed. Assuming, therefore, that you are already in possession of a right faith upon the reality of your Lord's resurrection, and the evidence for your own, I proceed to recommend steadfastness in performing the works of the Lord.

By those works are evidently meant the practice of all that is agreeable to the uncorrupted reason of our own minds—of all that is correspondent to the will of God, whether as collected from his works, or announced by his word,—of all that is conducive to the welfare of mankind, according to the various relations which they bear to us as social and religious creatures. Whatsoever, upon strict inquiry, corresponds to the will of God, must be considered as his work; for it contributes to his glory as the moral governor of the universe, and it is adapted to the dignity of our nature as moral agents, who by their own choice and their own powers are to forward their own salvation. By quelling our insolent passions we become harmless and without rebuke. In order to give a fuller scope to our benevolent affections, we must be still anxious to excel, still ambitious of higher and yet higher attainments, as the

instruments of awise and gracious Creator. Indeed our responsibility to him is co-extensive with our existence, and therefore our exertions to please him must be constant. But he that wishes to be virtuous only by starts deceives his own soul, and will gain the approbation neither of God nor man. All accidental pauses seem a deplorable waste of time—all deliberate deviations from a right course are yet more evidently so many obstacles to our success; and can you, who profess to believe in a religion so pure, so consistent, so holy, as that of Christ, suspect me of inculcating a morose, chimerical, impracticable system of virtue? No, surely. Between the rising and setting of every sun, every man who now hears me may find more or fewer occasions for the discharge of his Christian duty. He may correct some irregular desires—he may soften some untoward prejudice—he may conquer some perverse humour—he may detect some latent disposition to evil—he may strengthen what hitherto has been a languid and unsteady inclination towards good. Surely the industry men exercise day after day in their various callings, the bounty they practise among those whom they employ, or by whom they are employed, the sobriety they observe amidst numerous temptations to debauchery,—even these silent and unostentatious virtues invigorate those propensities and those habits, which form the character of a Christian. Every study in which we are engaged, every trade we carry on, every want that excites our hopes or fears, every circumstance that befals us, be it prosperous or adverse, may afford some

incentive for right action to a well-regulated mind. And thus too in regard to our souls, seldom indeed does there pass a day in which we do not become better or worse. We may check or indulge a train of virtuous thought—we may explain away or strengthen some religious principle—we may resist or yield to the temptations, which lead us into intemperance, or dishonesty, or uncharitableness—we may fall into the society of bad or good men, and be influenced by their example. We must therefore have a perpetual solicitude to walk as it becomes us to do, at all times, and in all places; and the will of God must be unto us not only the chief, but the constant rule of all our measures. Careless, however, as some of us may be about our spiritual concerns, amidst the din of a busy world—deluded as may be others by the flattering whispers of indolence and vanity—transported as may be too many to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think by pharisaical dreams of superstitious righteousness—numerous and urgent are the reasons which may be adduced for correcting our mistakes, and stimulating our efforts in that arduous labour which the Apostle recommends. Look back, I beseech you, upon the days which are gone by, and can never return—upon the thoughtless gaiety and hardy rashness of youth—on the desires which have actuated and the objects which have employed you in your riper years—can you seriously lay your hand upon your hearts, and, appealing to Heaven, can you affirm, that no one chasm is left for virtue, or that no one quarter has been occupied by vice?

Remembering that eternity is at stake, can you speak from your souls, as if in no one instance your salvation were endangered by thought, word, or deed? Have you never been hurried away by appetite?—never been misled by prepossession?—never inflamed by rage?—never seized with an inordinate love of wealth?—never intoxicated with the delirious pride of power?

Perhaps you have examined yourselves and endeavoured to repent. But is your repentance itself complete, as well as sincere? Are you not aware that, through the imbecility of human nature, your retreat from one fault may have been accompanied by approaches to another? He that would avoid parsimony, may have fallen into profusion; he that struggles against the quick and violent impulses of wrath, may have brooded over the gloomy and rancorous suggessions of revenge; he that has escaped from some perilous error about the evidences or the doctrines of religion, may be puffed up with excessive confidence in the sagacity of his own understanding, or the sanctity of his own character; he that would restrain the impetuosity of zeal may have sunk into the listlessness of indifference; he that has retired from the hidden snares, and the tumultuous agitations of active life, may have neglected many opportunities of diffusing happiness by his exertions, and encouraging virtue by his example.

Granting, however, that in the past, all is nearly well, I would ask, whether in the future, all will be safe? That ardour which you once felt in the pursuit

of truth, may hereafter cool;—those principles of religion, in which you once trusted with the utmost affiance, may decay by neglect, or be shaken by scepticism. During the slow and noiseless lapse of time, new associations and new sympathies may arise in your minds, and by the force of them your actions may be thrown into new directions. Under the galling pressure of afflictions hitherto unexperienced, you may be led to murmur at the dispensations of that Providence, which you have been accustomed to contemplate with silent reverence, and humble resignation. In the giddiness of unexpected prosperity, you may abuse the precious gifts of Heaven, and ungratefully forget, or impiously defy, the being by whom you have been preserved and even favoured. Every successive day is fraught with successive and unknown dangers. Desires and aversions, that have been dormant within the recesses of your bosoms, may be suddenly fanned into action, and rapidly bear you away from your wonted innocence. The triumph of competition, the attacks of enemies, the apathy of friends, the treachery of relations, may find you ill-prepared by candour to forgive, or by magnanimity to endure. Even the ruling passions, to which you had once referred all your secret weaknesses, and all your open faults, and which you had been anxious to subdue to the authority of religion, may change its manner of approach, and clothing itself in some new disguise, or allying itself to some new propensity, it may at one moment surprise you into guilt, and usurp again the dreadful mastery which you had formerly resisted

with success. But against these invisible and complicated dangers, how can you be provided effectually, unless you carry about you a sense of duty, founded upon the purest principles of religion, and strengthened by repeated resolutions to serve the Lord your God with all your hearts, and all your minds, and all your strength? If then the calls to amendment have been so often given, and so often disregarded—if our repentance in some cases is itself to be repented of —if the wisest among us have so many mistakes to rectify, and so many prejudices to conquer—if the best are exposed to danger from the wantonness of appetite, from the turbulence of passion, from moments of occasional infirmity, from the allurements of corrupt fashion, and above all from the deceitfulness of some favourite sin, which more frequently and more easily besets us, little doubt can you have as to the necessity of steadiness in your Christian course.

The text you will observe directs you to *abound* in the work of the Lord. And therefore, when entering upon the last head, I would remind you, that each duty is intimately connected with the other, and that a spirit of constancy is the most efficacious aid you can have for improvement in well-doing. Surely the frequent contemplation of virtue tends to make it more amiable to our feelings, and more easy in our conduct. As we are more confirmed in good habits, we are in less peril of relapsing into bad. The longer has been our perseverance in sobriety, or diligence, or integrity, the more rooted must be our aversion to the opposite vices; and as

conscience will at some season or other induce us to review our actions, difficult it must be for us to find any high degree of moral proficiency, without forming at least the wish of ascending to other degrees still higher.

If some changes, and I mean, you will remember, some material changes, were introduced into the technical language of certain modern writers, the eminence of whose talents is, I fear, more indisputable than the rectitude of their immediate views—if some important additions were made to their catalogue of human excellencies—if less efficacy were assigned to political institutions, and more to moral education—if the belief of a deity, not merely as an intelligent creator, but as a moral governor, were considered, as it unquestionably deserves to be considered, in the light of a principle recognized by experience almost universally congenial to the undebauched common sense of mankind, and conducive to the noblest interests of virtue, perhaps the unprejudiced and sober-minded Christian would have little hesitation in acknowledging that no limits can be safely assigned by our imaginations to the improvement of God's creatures, availing themselves of the opportunities which God himself may give them for improving, during that long succession of ages, through which it may be the will of God that they may gradually improve. Contending, as by the testimony of facts a Christian is warranted to contend, that religion is the auxiliary, the guide, and sometimes the best guardian of morality itself, he might collect many weighty reasons for his opinion, both

from metaphysical and historical investigations into the nature of man, and from many significant notices in the revealed word of God.

The precept of the Apostle for us to abound in good works, the general cause of virtue, and the peculiar spirit of these times may justify me, then, in endeavouring to state my sentiments upon a subject which has lately been much perplexed by ambiguity of terms, and by obliquity of principles. He that traces back the history of our species from the more to the less civilized state, from the civilized to the barbarous, and from the barbarous to the savage, must discern a progression not merely in the intellectual, but in the moral state of the world. He will find the same being, invested doubtless with the same powers, but furnished with opportunities indefinitely various for bringing those powers into action. In the savage state, self-preservation engrosses almost the whole attention of man; the malignant passions appear in their full deformity; the benevolent are rarely exercised; and the sense of deity either is not stamped in any distinct characters upon the mind, or is so dim and imperfect as to have little or no effect upon conduct. In the barbarous state, the control men acquire over appetite, or anger, or revenge, is weak and precarious; the scope they have for exercising benevolence is confined; and superstition is wont to assume its darkest and most terrific forms. But in the civilized state, men acquire at once the most enlarged, and the most correct views of their duty towards God, and towards men. Their wants, the means of supplying them, the relations,

in which they stand to those who do supply them, are multiplied. Their piety is incorporated with their reason and their very taste. The habit of abstract investigation leads them on to clearer evidence for the being of a God. And it most particularly deserves to be remarked, that during the process by which his existence is collected from his works, we necessarily and invariably collect, at the same time, our notions of his attributes. The sense of order, which acts most feebly indeed on the mind of a barbarian, impresses, in a state of civilization, the strongest conviction we can feel of God's wisdom. The experience we have of utility, and the reflections into which we are led upon its causes, modification, and extent, lay open to us the most magnificent views of God's goodness. The researches we make into the principles of justice and benevolence, as practised by ourselves through the wide and varied compass of our moral relations, conduct us to a brighter prospect of the same attributes in our moral governor. I do not think that the intellectual and the moral improvement of men bears such a proportion as can be reduced to rule, and authorize us to infer a certain quantity of the one from a certain quantity of the other. I admit that, from wars, from pestilence, from the operations of climates, from fearful changes in government, the one may be accelerated, and the other for a time retarded; yet I maintain that they have a mutual dependence, that they have a general tendency to produce each other, and any growth and decay which is very conspicuous and very permanent in the one,

will be accompanied by a real and visible growth or decay in the other. Thus we may reason upon the condition of men, when viewed collectively in an age or a nation. In regard to individuals, the repeated efforts of a virtuous man must increase his proficiency in virtue. That proficiency constitutes example—example incites to imitation—imitation, in favourable circumstances, may be multiplied ultimately to produce custom—by facilitating our actions, by increasing our experience of their fitness and utility, by inspiring us with sentiments of moral approbation towards ourselves and others, by constantly exercising our imitative and sympathetic faculties, custom produces general improvement—and to general improvement in a state of civil society, where the sensibility of man is quickened, where his condition is made better, where reason, law, and religion, assist the energies of each other, who will venture to fix any bounds?

Now as the moral principles of men thus situated are common to them all, so must their moral obligations, as far as they are perceived, be common. We do not know all the properties of matter; we cannot control many of those which we do know; and from the unalterable structure of our bodies, as well as the confined range of our observation, there will always be, in some respects, a limitation to our physical powers. But with our minds we may be fully acquainted. Our good and evil propensities we can accurately distinguish; and in all situations we are conscious of being bound to cultivate the one and to restrain the other. Our corporal and intellectual

powers have a wider range of action, and a happier as well as a fuller effect upon our moral condition.

Indeed the very term perfectibility itself, correctly stated and honestly employed, implies progression, or the capacity of progression, from good to better; it implies the absence of actual perfection. It implies also the power of approaching to it more and more. It does not amuse our pride with suggesting that we are entirely what we ought to be; but it serves to animate our diligence to become less and less deficient, and more and more virtuous, than in any given moment of our existence, and with any given portion of our excellence, we may have hitherto been. This is the sound and sober language of reason—warranted it is by the authority of the Apostle's command, to abound always in the work of the Lord. According to the different degrees in which we abound, we may hope for different rewards; but for the greatest degree there is provided a reward strictly adequate. So again for different degrees according to which we may be found defective in the works of the Lord, we may be pardoned; but even for the smallest deficiency we cannot be acquitted. To the justice of God we may look for approbation, if we conform to the rule—to his mercy we must look, if we deviate from it—but to the holiness of God only we must look for the rule itself; and that holiness forbids us to expect a rule that stops short of perfection. The rule, therefore, consistently enjoins virtue to the utmost extent, and as consistently it forbids vice even in the smallest. To suppose the contrary,

were to maintain that the rule discourages virtue and countenances vice — that it enforces some duties and slights others — that, in absolving us from the necessity of perfection, it furnishes us with a justification for being imperfect. But what is true of one man, to whom the rule is known, must be true of every man in the same circumstances; and in proportion as every man obeying that rule loves the Lord God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, our perfectibility as individuals will be experimentally ascertained, and "the earth will be filled with the righteousness of the Lord."

Doubtless the grave and solemn instructions which occur in the Scriptures bear little or no resemblance to the brilliant and exaggerated descriptions which we read in the systems of modern philosophy. They do not hold up to our imaginations any pictures of those halcyon days when the political state of mankind shall have reached the ἀκμὴ of regeneration, and shall be placed beyond the possibility of relapse — when laws shall be swept from the face of society as burthensome and loathsome excrescences — when faith, hope, and piety shall be cast away as incumbrances rather than aids to the practice of virtue — when the film of prejudice and error shall be quite cleared off from every understanding—when every selfish desire, and every irregular passion, shall be wholly subdued by the omnipotence of reason — when the process of nature, even in the animal world, shall be totally changed— when a longevity far exceeding what is recorded in the patriarchal ages shall be attainable by all inha-

bitants of all nations—and when the whole human species, having nothing to fear from intellectual or corporal decay, from the pangs of disease or the depredations of old age, shall triumphantly exclaim, "Blunted is the sting of death, and victory is destined to the grave no more."

Revelation does not, I grant, inculcate righteousness composed of the same materials, or destined for the same purposes, with that perfectibility upon which we have lately heard so many panegyrics, political and metaphysical, accompanied by so few evidences, speculative or practical. But pointing to death as a part of the scheme relating to the same creature man, and carried on by the same Being, who is the author of man's life — pointing to judgment after death—pointing to eternity—and intending to prepare us for it by a system of moral discipline, it certainly does instruct us to become new creatures—to grow in grace—to abound in good works always—to go on from strength to strength—to preserve a conscience void of all offence both towards God and man — to keep ourselves quite blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus — to be unwearied in well-doing — to put on the whole armour of God — to aspire to the fulness of the stature of the man of God. It is not, therefore, in a vague and rampant strain of rhetorical declamation, but with a deep insight into our weaknesses, our powers, and the various duties resulting from them, that St. Peter exhorts us to add, — or, in order to unfold the whole force of the original term, I should say, *to supply additionally*, and by way of

accumulation to some end, χορηγεῖν, to our faith, fortitude — for that probably is the meaning of the word ἀρετὴ, translated virtue — to fortitude knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. In this enumeration is presented to us a bright assemblage of all the moral and religious excellences that decorate and elevate the character of man — a perfection that is both intelligible and attainable — a rule of life far more correct, and far more comprehensive — founded on principles far more pure and more sublime, than philosophy, ancient or modern, has hitherto enforced. But, encompassed as you are by so many infirmities, known and unknown, and impelled by so many irregular desires, how shall you reach those excellencies, unless, in the language of the same Apostle, you "give all diligence?" Will you venture, then, to rend asunder what St. Peter has joined together? Will you in any one instance deliberately do what is expressly prohibited, or deliberately leave undone what is expressly enjoined? Will you say that I have faith, and fortitude is to me superfluous? I will be temperate, but take no heed to acquire patience? I am orthodox in my opinions, punctual in my devotions, and therefore shall stand acquitted for the want of brotherly love and charity? Consider, I beseech you, how little such feigned excuses will avail before God.

Readily do I grant that, according to the various occurrences of life, — according to the stations to

which you are called,— according to the measure of intellectual powers with which you are endowed,— according to the means which you have had for cultivating them, and to many other causes, both physical and moral, which are of considerable influence in forming your characters, different men will have occasion for different degrees of the same, and different virtues. But the seminal principles of all virtues ought to take root in the bosoms of all men; and in some stages or other of their lives they may all find their seasons of maturity, and bring forth some portion of salutary fruit. The truth of this general position will appear more fully from particular detail. Every man may be temperate, every man may be sincere, every man may speak truth, every man may abstain from injustice, every man is capable of practising that which is contained in what the judicial writers call the duties of perfect obligation. And even of those which are imperfect some part will fall to every man's share. If, then, you would excuse open remissness in well-doing by the plea that one talent only has been committed to you, be it remembered, that, instead of wrapping even that one in a napkin, you might have shewn yourselves servants not wholly unprofitable. For, be your abilities ever so scanty, and your station ever so obscure, still you may be courteous to your equals, respectful to your superiors, grateful to your benefactors, placable to your enemies, faithful to your friends, diligent in the service of your employers, and affectionate in the sweet charities of domestic life. Sometimes you may cast in your

mite for the relief of the poor and needy — you may administer a cup of cold water to the fainting traveller — you may assist the fatherless and the widowed in their afflictions, and pour the soft balm of consolation into their aching hearts. These, and more than these instances of Christian love, are within your reach, and for the least even of these verily there is a reward. Away then with all complaints of the Deity as a stern and imperious master, who would reap where he has not sown, and who with cruel mockery insults the weakness of his creatures, by imposing on them burdens which they cannot endure, by holding up to them a recompence which they cannot obtain, and by menacing them with punishments which they cannot but incur. If it is required of you to fulfil all righteousness, it is also given you to fulfil it; and as you have already seen that, in situations which you think most unfavourable to virtue, men may in many important respects be virtuous, I will further show to you, that in conditions and characters which appear the most opposite, you have occasion for the same moral and religious qualifications. If the sun shine, and the refreshing rain descend, alike upon the just and the unjust, are they not bounden alike to lift up the voice of thanksgiving to their heavenly father? If neither the learned nor the unlearned are exempt from the delusions of error and the tyranny of prejudice, should they not equally cultivate a spirit of docility and caution? If the rich as well as the poor are exposed to sickness, to sorrow, and all the sudden changes and incalculable

chances of this mortal life, do they not alike stand in need of humility and patience? If some men are in danger from the subtleties of philosophy, and others from the visions of fanaticism or superstition, should they not equally endeavour to hold fast the true faith without wavering and without guile? Now to fail in any one of these duties is a deviation from that righteousness which the Gospel has prescribed; but to succeed in any is an accession to our good works. And be assured, from the activity of the human mind itself, that unless you are progressive towards virtue, you will be retrograde towards vice.

The world around you is in a continual change, and vain it is to suppose, that external circumstances will not have their usual influence in making you worse or better, in disposing you towards new habits, or confirming you in those which you have already formed. Highly therefore does it concern us to be stedfast in good principles, to abound in good works, to rescue ourselves from the dominion of every sin, to flee from it when temptations are at hand, to be on our guard against it even when they seem to be remote. More especially should we be on the watch against the pride of our own hearts, when they suggest to us, that we are much wiser and much better than other men, or at least, quite wise enough, and quite good enough to have established our own title to salvation. No, that salvation is equally incompatible with the languor of indifference, the gloominess of despondence, and the security of presumption. It must be worked out

with fear and trembling. It requires unremitted vigilance, and renovated efforts, if we are really intent upon so performing the works of the Lord, that our labour in the Lord may be finally approved.

To conclude;—the perfect man as described by the sacred writers is far superior to the perfect man of whom the Stoicks boasted so highly. The teachers of that school, we are told, extended the boundaries of speculative duty somewhat farther than what nature meant, that when we had striven with our minds towards the ultimate point, we might stop in our practice where it is fitting to stop. But Christianity inculcates no such impracticable virtues, and sets before us no such dubious exceptions. It professedly and repeatedly proposes for our imitation the example of Christ, and it places his miraculous deliverance from the power of death not merely as an article of faith, but as an incentive to obedience. Would we then resemble him, according to the capacity, which God has bestowed upon us—according to the commands which he has laid upon us—according to the rewards which he has promised to us, we must endeavour with all our hearts, and all our minds, to abound in all the works of the Lord. If even upon this side of the grave we cannot labour so to do in vain, because every attempt to be virtuous strengthens our virtuous habits—because every reflection upon virtue more recommends it to our reason, and more endears it to our affection—because every exercise of virtue has a direct or an indirect tendency to promote even

our temporal welfare. Above all, if our labour shall be recompensed with life everlasting, shall we fluctuate in our opinions? shall we hesitate in our choice? shall we struggle with our spiritual enemies faintly, and thus forfeit our claim to the high prize that is set before us? After reviewing the various stages of our past life, and exploring the real state of our hearts, shall we venture to fix upon any point where our obedience to the will of the Lord has been quite sufficient, and where any additions to it may be slighted as a mere superfluity?—God forbid!—Whatsoever may be the resolutions of a man for the present time, a time will come, at which, above all pleasures however alluring, all riches however dazzling, all power however exalted, he will learn to set a just value on the progress he has made in practical goodness. When temporal distinctions shall have vanished away—when the earth itself shall be loosened from its old foundation—when men and angels shall be assembled at the last trump, and the son of God shall have come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead—even at this awful crisis, the works we have done in the Lord's name will survive the wreck of nature, and procure for us an abundant recompense in the mansions of the blessed.

# SERMON XXV.

CONSECRATION SERMON.

## 1 Corinth. xiv. 33.

*God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.*

The Apostle is here speaking of the gift of teaching by Divine Revelation; he is laying down rules for the use of that gift; and with great propriety, and great energy, he enforces a prudent and regular application of this distinguished privilege, when he says the author of it is a God, not of confusion, but of peace; οὐκ ἐστιν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς, ἀλλ' εἰρήνης.

Some difficulty, however, seems to have arisen about the import of the word, which we render *confusion;* and as it occurs rarely, I would briefly endeavour to open the real and the full force of it in the passage before us.

Ἀκαταστασία is to be classed among those words which are called Hellenistic, and of which the true meaning is to be traced by comparison with the Septuagint version, and with the Hebrew text. In the Septuagint it is found only once, Prov. xxvi. verse 28, στόμα δὲ ἄστεγον ποιεῖ ἀκατασίας; which is most cor-

rectly, and, I think, most emphatically rendered by our translators, "a flattering tongue worketh *ruin*."

The etymology of the Greek word evidently shows that it stands in contradistinction to *stability*; and the same idea is impressed upon us more forcibly by the correspondent Hebrew term נדחה. דחה the verb, is explained by Stockius, *ad motum vehementer concitavit*; דחה the noun, *Impulsio ad lapsum*, as it occurs twice in the Psalms; and נדחה, which is found only in this passage, *Impulsi ad lapsum, sive in ærumnas*. Gussètius, with greater correctness, and with yet greater perspicuity, says, דחה *non est impellere simpliciter, sed ut impellunt qui volunt dejiciendo affligere humi*.

I have ventured to enlarge upon the word, because the learned Schultens, in his elaborate commentary on the book of Proverbs, has passed it over in silence; because the translation received in our Church seems deficient both in exactness and strength; and because the use I shall make of the text in my present discourse, is founded upon a just and enlarged apprehension of the peculiar term which the Apostle has employed.

I understand therefore the Apostle to mean, not merely *confusion* in a vague and general sense; but so great a degree of it, as tended to produce the subversion of those religious societies which he had formed with such zeal, regulated with such wisdom, and established with such diligence.

If his disciples, impelled by vanity, or heated by enthusiasm, were not content to teach *singly*; if,

through impatience to communicate what was revealed by the Holy Spirit, they were determined to violate the rules of decorum, and to perplex the understandings of their hearers by confused and clamorous interpretation; the obvious consequence of such irregularity was, that the Church of Christ must have been disgraced and divided, and that wanting order, it must also have wanted stability.

From this explanation of the word, we are naturally led to consider in a more extensive point of view the advantages which every religious community derives from religious discipline; for it contributes at once to the efficacy of religious teaching, and to the permanency of the doctrines taught.

The uniform practice of civilized nations forms a strong presumption in favour of every measure which they have concurred in adopting. The propriety of the particular modes may indeed be disputable; but the principle surely must be sound upon which all have acted. Now, in Heathen and Jewish nations, religion, in some kind or other, has always been established. It has also been established in Mahometan and Christian countries; and whatever ideas men may entertain upon the subject of Christian liberty, no clear and satisfactory proof has been adduced, from which it appears that a national religion is inconsistent either with the express commands or the vital spirit of Christianity.

We are told indeed, that "quarrels about religion were unknown to the Heathens; because the religion of the Heathens consisted rather in rites and ceremonies than in any constant belief." This

assertion has been made by Bacon* in a spirit of philosophy, and repeated with some little variation by the historian of the Roman Empire in a spirit of sarcasm.

So far as the passage in Bacon goes to mere fact, it is to be admitted with great restrictions; but even if we admit it fully and unequivocally, it does not follow that no Heathen religion was established, or that the state was totally indifferent to the influence of it upon the people.

The Pythagorean verses recommend the worship of the gods, νόμῳ ὡς διάκειται. At Athens, no worship of a new deity could be introduced without the approbation of the Areopagus; † and even in that boasted seat of liberty, the government scrupled not to impose what may properly be deemed a test: I mean the oath to conform to the national religion, which Stobæus ‡ has preserved, and which was exacted of every Athenian citizen before his admission to that share of the administration, to which as a member of a democracy he had a constitutional right.

Amongst the Romans, Augustus made some corrective regulations in the ceremonies of Bacchus. § And even in the times of the common-wealth, by the Sulpicia Sempronia Lex no temple or altar could be consecrated, without express leave from

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* Essay iii.

† See Petit's Leges Atticas. See Div. Leg. vol. ii. book ii. sect. 6.

‡ See Div. Legat. b. ii. sect. &c.

§ See Taylor's Civil Law.

the senate and the majority of the tribunes; and by the Lex Papiria, which received its name from a tribune of the people, no kind of consecration could take place, unless the commons first gave it their sanction.

Whether, therefore, the state interposes in points of ceremony, or in points of faith, or in both, it countenances some kind of national religion; it exercises some authority over the professions and the worship of its members; it protects what appears salutary; restrains what appears pernicious; and prevents, or endeavours to prevent, the private sentiments of citizens from becoming the occasion of public confusion.

The truth of the religion, whatever it is, is equally assumed in a Heathenish, a Mahometan, or a Christian country; and the object of the magistrate in regulating the concerns of that religion is equally in each, utility, as it affects the community. The extent indeed in which he interposes, for the purposes of encouragement, or of prevention, must be left to his own wisdom, for the proper exercise of which, in a matter of such extensive concern, he is severely responsible; but it well deserves to be remarked, that no invidious and declamatory representations of the abuse of his power, disprove the possibility of a right use of it. The opinions of men, as such, he cannot control, whilst they exist only in the minds of those who entertain them; but when those opinions are proclaimed, and affect the visible conduct of those who teach, and those who adopt them, they become the proper objects of his

cognizance. He attends to them, not as abstractedly true or false, but as being in their consequences beneficial or destructive. He encourages them if they promote peace—he restrains them if they engender confusion.

Thus far we are vindicating establishments, as they fall under the notice of the magistrate; and if we consider the principles of those regulations which affect the internal government of a church, we shall find them precisely the same with those on which all religious societies whatever, be their doctrines true or false, their ceremonies rational or irrational, their numbers great or small, are invariably and unavoidably founded.

When men professedly assemble together for the purpose of worshipping God, they always have a preference to some particular modes of opinion or ceremony; what they prefer, they profess and practise; and what they profess and practise, they endeavour to regulate and perpetuate. But how can these ends be attained without government? And how are the essential properties of government wanting, because it exists among some with bishops, among others with elders, and among a third party in the congregation itself? In all these societies there is some bond of union; and in all there is some kind of authority or other to preserve it. They who insist most vehemently upon the indifference of ceremonies, are obliged to adopt some, which, as soon as they are adopted, are no longer considered as indifferent: for, by the observance or the neglect of them, a society as such is kept toge-

ther or dissolved. They who contend for the most unbounded liberty, hold some opinions to be true and some false; and, though in many particulars they may allow a difference of interpretation among their teachers, it is a well known fact, that the license is not entirely unqualified and unlimited; that they become acceptable to their followers by opposing some tenets, and offensive by inculcating others. If there were no agreement of opinion in any one point, why should a society be formed at all? And if that agreement be not professedly and avowedly maintained, how should a society be continued?

Some sectaries approve a very simple, and some a more ornamental form of worship. Some parties are more anxious about matters of doctrine, and some about matters of ceremony; but the principles upon which their regulations are built, imply in both a right to preserve what they approve; and the intention of both is to give permanence to the society, by excluding occasions of confusion, and by fixing arbitrarily upon some means of internal peace.

The Church of England therefore in its discipline aims at what all societies must in some degree pursue, I mean at order and peace. It exercises, what they also in some form exercise, authority over its teachers; it allows, what they also allow, liberty of professing opinions which are consistent with peace; it restrains, what they to the extent of their power endeavour to restrain, the public introduction of tenets or ceremonies which have a tendency to produce confusion; it prescribes, as they do, regulations for its own members only; and it

leaves, as they do, to other societies the power of making regulations for themselves. Thus far then it appears that all religious societies endeavour to prevent disorder and disunion in their own body; and that the same social principle which brings them together, impels them to continue together upon some terms of mutual consent.

The general controversy concerning the lawfulness and expediency of establishments has been lately agitated, and the subject nearly exhausted. At the close of it there is, however, room for cool and unprejudiced men to indulge many comfortable and many instructive reflections. The existence of such controversies produces many beneficial effects, which came not within the view of zealous advocates on either side; it habituates men to reflect with gratitude and with triumph on the value of those blessings which they had before been content with the possession of, without feeling the use; it shows them the impertinence and the fallacy of popular clamours; and it impresses them with a deep and awful sense of the dangers which must ever accompany precipitate and undistinguishing innovation, by whatever name it may be disguised, and with whatever ardour it may be recommended.

In the zeal of other men we find occasion for the exercise of our own charity. While we gain a deeper insight into their errors, we learn to think more favourably of their motives; while we investigate their pretensions, we find the necessity of resisting those pretensions, in order to secure the unequivocal and substantial advantages which we have already obtained.

The utility of human institutions is not now to be decided by intricate and abstract speculations, or by hardy and novel assumptions, but by a plain and simple appeal to fact. From that appeal we know, that public authority does not break in upon the rights of private judgment; that the establishment of a church does not impede the intellectual improvement of its members; that stability in external forms and doctrines promotes, in the great mass of mankind, the internal efficacy of Christian truth; and that by a well regulated connection between the interests of church and state, religion is rendered the instrument, not of confusion, but of peace.

By experience we have gained the power of distinguishing between harmless and mischievous speculations. We know to what extent the one are to be tolerated, and by what means the other are to be resisted. And here be it spoken to the honour of our Church, no means have been employed which are at all inconsistent with our duties as Christians, or our rights as citizens. We have not lifted up the terrors of persecution; we have not controlled, nor endeavoured to control, the freedom of the press; we have preserved not only our firmness, but our moderation in circumstances where the timid jealousy, or the impatient haughtiness of earlier times might have prompted men to the use of more violent expedients. When the passions of men were in a state of irritation and violence, almost beyond example; when the evidence of facts was overwhelmed in a mass of visionary theories,

attractive from their speciousness, and delusive from their subtlety; when the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty were rudely thrown off from their ancient basis; and when the superstructure was to be raised in circumstances which left the rash every thing to hope, and the dispassionate every thing to fear; in this awful situation of affairs, our Establishment withstood every shock, and prevented that confusion in the state, which, at such a time, must have arisen even from the slightest alteration in the church. For, I scruple not to assert, that under such circumstances even the slightest attempt to change a part would have been big with disaster and peril to the whole; would have reached to the state as well as the church; would have emboldened faction as well as multiplied heresy; would have perpetuated confusion, and bereaved us at once of the hope and the means of peace. We opposed not violence to violence, but argument to argument; we pushed forwards no one new and precarious pretension, but were content with asserting our old and well-founded rights. We distinguished what in the heat of controversy is too often confounded; and we granted what in times of public distress and public tumult has been generally, and it may be, wisely refused. We enlarged the boundaries of toleration to those who differed from us; but we disdained to become the dupes of artifice, or the tools of sedition.

And here then let me ask, whether so many evils could have been avoided, or so much good retained, if our Church had been built on any other principles,

or the teachers of it had been actuated by any other spirit? It was founded in times not of peace, but of confusion; and many were the difficulties, and many the dangers, with which our forefathers struggled to give it that consistency and firmness, that purity and dignity, that strong and intimate connection with the best interests of a free and enlightened people in which we received it, and are bound to preserve it.

It should be remembered, that when we were called to the task of super-reformation, the evils complained of were not even professed to be of such magnitude or such notoriety, as those which had already been reformed. It should be remembered, that political as well as religious contention was then raging; that we were contending not only with the calamities of a foreign, but with the tumults of what might be called a civil war; and that in the very moment when it was difficult to make any change, we were called upon to make the greatest possible changes—to make them in the doctrines and discipline of our church, and in the forms of our civil constitution.

Instead therefore of exploring upon dark and doubtful principles the origin of our rights, let us consider the social and religious purposes to which they have been applied. Instead of indulging our fancies in the contemplation of an ideal peace, which the discordant opinions, and the ruffled tempers of men might soon have destroyed, let us reflect on the confusion that has been actually prevented. Instead of expatiating on the possible ad-

vantages of change, let us be thankful to Almighty God for the real and solid blessings of stability.

From these reflections, I think, the expediency of Establishment manifestly appears; and when we have advanced thus far in our defence, we shall find it an easy task to vindicate the lawfulness of it, whether we direct our attention to the general principles of policy, or pursue those abstract reasonings, into which all inquiries concerning the actions of men may be resolved. To the philosopher we shall grant, that truth derives its value from utility; to the statesman we may confidently appeal for the existence of such utility in our own establishment; and to the religionist we shall find no great difficulty in evincing the general truth of its doctrines, and the general tendency of its discipline to promote piety and virtue.

We distinguish indeed the fundamental points of faith from those of opinion, order, and good intention.* We do not suppose them to be of equal importance, or appeal for the proof of them to an authority equally sacred; but we experimentally know the connection which subsists between them; and in proportion as we are anxious to secure the truth of the one, we employ our wisdom in preserving and regulating the other.

Now, if the religious establishment of this country be well accommodated to its civil constitution, it is a truth which not only follows from this proposition, but is actually involved in it, that from the prosperity and good order of the church—that from

* Bacon, Essay iii.

all the political and religious purposes, for which it is instituted, Episcopacy is inseparable.

In the present state of things it conveys an authority to the governors, which by no means breaks in upon the liberty of the governed. It prevents that confusion which must arise from the unlicensed and arbitrary use of opinion, humour, or prejudice in the administration of sacred things, the external modes of which must always have a considerable influence on the sentiments as well as the morals, and upon the civil as well as the religious characters of the community.

But from the salutary influence of episcopacy in this country, we are on the present occasion naturally led to consider the circumstances under which it has been introduced into, and the effects by which it may be followed in the Western Continent.

You well remember the scheme that was some years ago proposed for placing the Church of England on a broader and firmer footing in North America; and you will not condemn me for paying a tribute of veneration to the memory of that illustrious prelate, who engaged in the business with such ardour, and pleaded for it with such ability.

The event, however, was not correspondent to the wishes of good men, or to the probable interest of the Colonies. The rooted prepossessions of those who dissented from the Establishment, the restless ambition of some, and the cold neutrality of others, unhappily baffled a measure, the success of which might possibly have prevented the distressing scenes which succeeded. They, however, who reflect on

what has lately passed before us, must confess that little room was left for our most sanguine well-wishers to expect such fortunate opportunities as have since arisen for the establishment of an English Church. What was attempted in vain while the British empire in the West remained whole and unbroken, is now begun to be effected in provinces no longer subject to our government.

The ways of Providence are mysterious; and from events where human foresight looks only for confusion, hopeless and irremediable, Divine wisdom educes the means of peace. In America, as well as in our own country, that turbulence of passion, and that violence of conduct, which gives a just alarm to good men, may be followed by effects more permanent and more auspicious, than human exertions and human counsels could effect.

After an awful pause from the struggles and miseries of civil dissension, the truly enlightened and worthy will look back with improvement, and forward with hope. They have now seen the dangerous excesses of liberty, and will balance them against the supposed, or if you will, the probable evils of oppression. They will find that the Church of England in practice, as well as profession, disdains to lay a galling yoke upon the consciences of men. Reflecting on the confusion and madness of former times, they will repress those popular and delusive misrepresentations which prevailed too long and too far; and they will set a just value on those decent and prudent institutions, which in reality belong to their peace. They will consider that our

ceremonies and doctrines are introduced among them, not by wily artifice, or imperious force; but in consequence of their own request, and with a view to their own happiness. They may triumph in their own superior felicity, in having received in times of tranquillity and order those wise regulations, which in this country were sealed with the blood of martyrs. They may appeal for the utility of them, not to doubtful controversy, but to long and manifest experience. They will have no reason to complain, either that their ancient privileges are violated, by what have been called the gaudy trappings of hierarchy, or that their civil immunities are endangered by the introduction of an enormous spiritual authority. While the governors of the church on the one hand are deterred from aiming at any mischievous stretch of power, the members of it on the other will see the importance of peace and unanimity; and both, we trust, will be induced to cultivate that temper of charity, which is most friendly to the welfare of society, and most congenial to the spirit of Christianity. In short, their proposals did not originate in a wild and intemperate fondness for experiment; and our concurrence cannot be imputed to insidious friendship, or officious zeal.

As Christians, therefore, we rejoice that the pure and apostolical form of spiritual government is at length visible on the Western Continent; as Englishmen, we look forward to the political consequences of this event with just and well-founded hope.

The bad consequences arising from the want of a rational form of worship, and the policy of giving a legal sanction to one scheme of church government in preference to others, is sufficiently evident from the arguments already adduced in favour of national establishments, and from the general practice of almost every people.

Several of these arguments, however, may be applied with additional efficacy on the present occasion. If the force of religious prejudices be so frequently and fatally conspicuous; if bigotry and fanaticism have so often engaged men in the most dangerous and bloody combinations, may not the prevalence of mild and rational religion, and of liberal but just ideas of ecclesiastical authority, prove the best means of preventing those dissensions to which great and extended empires are naturally subject? If an enmity to spiritual subordination has ever been accompanied by a seditious and republican spirit, we may conclude, that where episcopal principles predominate, an attachment to well-regulated monarchy will prevail likewise. In a word, if harmony in religious opinions tend to promote the peace and good order of every political society, its necessity is evidently increased by the peculiar circumstances of our American Colonies; by their distance from the seat of empire, and their vicinity to a rising and active republic.

Let us then bless God that the favourableness of the occasion is so evidently adapted to the importance of the measure. Let us rejoice, that in seasons of public tranquillity, and of serious and dispassion-

ate reflection, our religious constitution has been introduced into America; and let us hope, that by establishing a system of rational discipline and worship, and by diffusing a salutary spirit of peace and union, it may long be preserved to the edification of our Christian brethren, to the credit of our ecclesiastical government, and to the glory of that Heavenly religion whose author we adore as the God, not of confusion, but of peace.

# SERMON XXVI.*

ON THE SACRAMENT.

## Luke xxii. 19 & 20.

*And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

*Likewise also the cup after Supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

In the course of such observations as I shall make upon the text for the guidance of your judgments, and the peace of your consciences, I shall in my first discourse lay before you some account of the differences of opinion which prevail among Christians upon the nature and end of the sacraments, and I shall assign my reasons for wishing that the contending parties were actuated by a spirit of mutual forbearance and moderation.

In a second, I shall fully explain to you the origin and the import of three very significant words, which are connected with the subject, viz. Sacrament, Mystery, Eucharist; and in a third, I shall endeavour to set right a numerous, but misguided

* December 1821.

class of Christians, upon the real meaning of St. Paul's words in the text, and upon the qualifications necessary for a pious remembrance of their Saviour at the Lord's Supper.

It has often been remarked by the most judicious advocates of the Christian cause, that while various systems of heathenism prescribe ceremonies, some burthensome, and others ostentatious, some unprofitable to good morals, and others injurious to them, the Founder of our religion was content to establish only two rites, easy in performance, and simple in appearance. To this position every inquirer will readily assent, while he takes his views of Baptism and the Lord's Supper from Scriptural testimony alone. Much, therefore, is it to be lamented, that upon points which seem at first so intelligible, long and fierce disputes should have arisen in the Christian world. Melancholy is the picture of human weakness and human pride, when it is remembered that upon the nature and end of the Sacrament critics and theologians should have assailed each other with the most intemperate wrath — that Church should be divided from Church—that Sect should be opposed to Sect — and that difference of opinion should have subjected the most conscientious men to invectives, to anathemas, to fines, to exile, to chains, to dungeons, and to the destroying fire. We must necessarily imagine, that in this last solemn interview with his Disciples, and in the appointment of a ceremony which was intended to bring to their memory the approaching death of their Master, he would employ such terms as would

be clearly comprehended by his hearers, and such too as evidently alluded to the customs of the Jews. Thus, in truth, did our Heavenly Master act.

It was the practice of the Jews to bless God, and give thanks to Him, when they ate their meals; they did not bless twice, as we do, before and after; but their blessing was pronounced once over the bread, and once over the wine, separately. This was done by Christ, and done at the Supper. His words were, "Take, eat, this is my body," and it is quite impossible for them to have taken the words literally, and to have supposed that they were eating the flesh of Jesus, who sat with them at table. He did not say this *will* be my body at any other time, or in any other place, when you commemorate my death. He said expressly and distinctly, "this *is* my body;" and his hearers could not, for one moment, mistake his allusion. Christ and his Disciples had been celebrating the Passover, and his Disciples must have heard, again and again, that the Paschal Lamb was called by the Jews "the body of the Passover." So far, then, the description of the rite was taken from the familiar language of the Jews, but the resemblance goes no farther than words; for the intention of our Lord was to inform his Disciples, that in breaking bread they were not, like the Jews, to commemorate the event which gave rise to the term Passover, but to signify their remembrance of a far more important circumstance in the sufferings of their Saviour upon the Cross. Again, he took the cup, he gave thanks, he held it out to them, he described it as the blood

of the New Testament, that is, confirmatory of the New Testament. This blood, as we read in Mark, was shed for many; it was shed for you, as we read in St. Luke: it was shed for many, as we read in St. Matthew, who alone adds, you will observe, "for the remission of sins."

St. Paul in the eleventh chapter of the first of Corinthians twice uses the phrase, "Do this in remembrance of me," but does not subjoin one word about the "remission of sins." Now, when our Lord used the word *many*, he meant to prepare his hearers for believing, that not only the Jews, but the Gentiles were included in that new covenant which our Lord graciously established; and in the Epistle, there are numerous passages where the admission of the Gentiles to the benefit of that covenant is accompanied by a declaration, that the sins, which they had committed in their former state, would be forgiven in consequence of their faith. That faith led them to expect the forgiveness even of future sins upon the indispensible condition of repentance; and this forgiveness, you must never forget, was to be granted, not as the reward of any merit on the part of man, but as an act of the covenanted mercy on the part of God, announced to us again and again in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The absence of the words "for the remission of sins," in St. Luke, St. Mark, and St. Paul, does not by any means obscure the meaning of Christ, when he speaks of the wine to be drunk, as symbolical of his blood, nor does it by any means impair the force of his injunction for the disciples to drink of

that wine, as a memorial that Christ had shed that blood. But why, you may ask, should St. Matthew introduce it? The reason is obvious. St. Matthew particularly intended his Gospel for the perusal of the Jews. They considered the Gentiles as unholy outcasts from the favour of God; and therefore St. Matthew, with great propriety, informs them that at a most solemn season, and at the institution of a ceremony which was to be observed by Christians of all ages, our Lord spoke of his blood as shed, not for the disciples only, but for many; and among these many, for the Gentiles who were soon to be partakers of all the blessings which the new covenant was appointed to convey. Among those blessings is the remission of sins—that two-fold remission which I have just now explained to you.

Knowing, and deploring the mistakes, which in too many parts of the Christian world prevail about the efficacy of Christ's blood, I will endeavour to make it intelligible to all of you: and for that purpose, I shall follow the statement, and in some cases, adopt the words of a most learned and able expositor, who was eminently happy in elucidating one text by its relation to another, and whose key to the apostolical writings has been generally and deservedly admired. Let me then intreat you to recollect that "all the mercy and love of God from first to last, from the original purpose of God to our final salvation, in the actual possession of eternal life, is not, as you often and erroneously read in our version of the New Testament and in the Prayer Book, for the sake of Christ, but in Christ, by

Christ, and through Christ. He was the minister or agent appointed by the deity to convey to us those blessings. His blood cannot possibly be considered as a ministering or instrumental cause. His blood was not an agent, but an object. It may be a moving cause or a reason for bestowing blessings, but an active or instrumental cause it could not be. Let us then set a high value upon the blood and death of Christ, as a most consolatory and a most satisfactory assurance of pardon. But let us not forget that it is something more. The blood of Christ, in regard merely to the matter of it, is a corporeal substance, and of little value. But the blood of Christ, as shed for us, implies the perfect obedience and the perfect goodness of Christ. That goodness and that obedience were indeed exercised through the whole state of his humiliation: but they were peculiarly and eminently manifested by his death." Thus far Dr. J. Taylor.* If Christ had not died, we should have lost the benefit of his holy example in patience and resignation. We should have lost the benefit of that testimony, which was borne to the truth of his religion, when he voluntarily laid down his life as the defender of it. We should have lost the benefit of that most decisive and most animating proof of our own resurrection, which, by the mercy of God, was given to us, when Christ rose from the dead. Here then you see the intimate and striking connection which subsists between the shedding of Christ's blood and the evi-

* See p. 44 of Taylor's Synopsis.

dences of the Gospel, some of the most important events recorded in it, and the salutary efficacy of it in making us wise unto salvation.

From my habitual dislike of theological controversy, I shall not expatiate upon the paradoxes, and what seem to me, the errors of the Church of Rome, when the members of it contend, that in partaking of the Lord's Supper, many men in many places do, at one and the same time, actually eat the very body, and drink the very blood of Christ; and that after the pronunciation of particular words by the priest, there is a renovation of actual sacrifice again and again performed for every communicant in every sanctuary. But from my love of truth and justice I disdain to question the sincerity or to depreciate the piety of any Romanist. I allow, that in the defence of their tenets, they have often displayed great ingenuity in reasoning, and great research in collecting the opinions of many Christian writers. Were not Bourdelot, Pascal, Rollin, Bossuet, Huet, and Fenelon, professedly Romanists? And what man of sense or man of virtue ever thinks of those luminaries without affection, or speaks of them without admiration? Persons, in our own times, there may be, who seek, some preferment, and others renown, as skilful and heroic champions of that Protestant cause, to which I am myself attached unfeignedly. But, I am not accustomed to draw the materials of my creed from the petty and shallow effusions of hireling sciolists—from the courtly addresses of academical and clerical bodies—or from the parliamentary harangues of uninformed

and unprincipled politicians. Instead of echoing and re-echoing their savage clamours, I, with a deep consciousness of my own fallibility, have observed the slow and often interrupted progress of the human mind in the discovery of truth, as it may be traced in the historical and political writings of two or three reigns, which succeeded the Reformation as it stood at the decease of Henry the Eighth. But what do I there find? The very reverse of what is alledged, or even, what seems to be known, by the busy, precipitate, dogmatical disputants among my contemporaries. I find, that in the times just now mentioned, several distinguished scholars and several venerable prelates in our establishment continued to hold nearly the same language with the Romanists, upon the corporeal presence of Christ in the Sacrament. Eagerly had they abandoned, and firmly did they persevere in condemning, the doctrine of indulgences, masses for the souls of the dead, the unbounded authority of the Pope in spiritual matters, and the worship paid to the Virgin Mary, as mother of God, to canonize saints and holy relics. But the prejudices of education upon one subject, strengthened by custom, kept hold of their judgment, or I should rather say, of their conscience. They were afraid to snap asunder one very strong link of the chain, by which they, from their youth upwards, had imagined their faith to be bound to the throne of God. They were afraid to break loose suddenly and entirely from that literal sense of Scripture, which in many parts of Christendom had been defended by the united strength of criticism,

logic, and the supposed approbation of some ancient fathers. They were afraid to act under the banner of human reason, in opposition to a tenet which had been endeared to their feelings, and consecrated to their imagination by the sacred majesty of mystery; they were afraid to abandon a tenet, which to them appeared of vital importance, and thus to mutilate and contaminate an act of adoration, when, upon their bended knees, they were acknowledging the transcendental merits of that Redeemer, who shed his innocent blood for their sake upon the cross. If such were the scruples of avowed, and in many respects enlightened Protestants, why should we wonder; and still more, why should we rail at the unshaken conviction and unabated zeal of those who preserve their attachment to the Church of Rome? We hope, by the aid of Heaven, to have been delivered from their errors; and therefore, let us not in the spirit of hell, deride their understandings and vilify their devotion. I am not desirous, directly or indirectly, to justify their opinions upon the Sacrament: but never can I give my assent to the language, which has been lately holden by too many of my contemporaries. The Romanists, in my judgment, are not guilty of idolatry, inasmuch as they do homage, not to the bread and wine, retaining their original substance, but to the bread and wine losing, as they believe, that substance, and transmuted into the body and blood of Christ. They are not guilty of idolatry, for they intend, not to worship bread and wine, the material creatures of the Almighty, but to acknowledge reverently the

immediate and actual presence of that being, whom the Church of England, like their own, adores under the hallowed name of God.

Feeling, as I do, unfeigned and unceasing solicitude for the honour of our Ecclesiastical Establishment, I think it incumbent upon me to explain to you some passages, not indeed publicly read to our congregations, but likely to mislead persons, whose curiosity or seriousness may have induced them to look at an authorized appendage to our Communion Service.

The Rubric, which imputes to the Church of Rome idolatry, is now the only part of our Common Prayer Book which contains such a charge. I will therefore state to you the history of it.

It does not occur in the Liturgy, which had been composed in the reign of Henry VIII. But as some objections were afterwards taken against that Liturgy, Archbishop Cranmer, in the reign of Edward VI. proposed a new review. Hence, at the end of the year 1550, or the beginning of 1551, the Rubric in question was added, and it was confirmed by Parliament in the last-mentioned year. The obvious intention of it was, to explain the reason of our kneeling at the Sacrament; and also, to oppose the notion of Christ's corporeal presence. But in the succeeding reign of Queen Elizabeth, there was another review; and the Rubric, which had been introduced in the second book of King Edward the Sixth, was then left out; "for," says Wheatley, "it was the Queen's design to unite the nation in one faith. It was therefore recommended to the Divines

to see that there should be no definition made against the aforesaid notion, but that it should remain as a speculative opinion not determined, in which every one was left to the freedom of his own mind."

In the reign of James the First, the addition you read about the Sacraments at the end of the Catechism was inserted, and there the spiritual presence of Christ is maintained without any invidious mention of the Romanists, who contended for the corporeal presence. The Communion and Rubric rejected in the reign of Elizabeth, accusing the Romanists of idolatry, was with great discretion not restored during the reign of her two successors. Thus matters stood till the last Review in 1661, which was the second year of Charles the Second. Our forefathers then had warm disputes with the Puritans about kneeling at the Communion-table; and, in order to obviate their objections, the Rubric, which justifies that posture against the Puritans, which also pronounces, against the Catholics, the adoration of the elements to be idolatrous, was unhappily replaced in the Common Prayer Book, where it continues to this day. The Puritans, who do not kneel, have ceased to blame the Church of England for kneeling; and the Romanists are justly offended with us for accusing them of idolatry. I know that, in point of fact, very few clergymen read the Rubric. I have met with some worthy men who were utterly ignorant of its existence. But, within these few years, I have seen some writings of polemics, who, with most unbe-

coming hardihood and bitterness, have adopted from it the opprobrious term *idolatry;* and as such language serves only to exasperate, I should rejoice to hear that the whole rubric were again removed by proper authority. Let us kneel, though some of Protestant brethren, from conviction, kneel not. Let us believe only in the spiritual presence of Christ; and, at the same time, let us not be rash in affirming that they who believe in the corporeal presence direct their adoration to the sacramental bread and wine bodily received; while in their professions, and in reality, they mean to adore the body and blood of Christ, into which the external elements, according to their sincere persuasion, have been changed. Why then should our Prayer Book be stained, even in one instance, with unnecessary, and in some degree, I think, unjust reproach?

Do not suppose that, in recommending the omission of a rubric which severely wounds the sensibility of Romanists, I have not some warrant from precedent as well as reasoning. Would you not startle, if you were now to read in the Litany, "from the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and from all his detestable enormities, good Lord deliver us?" Yet these terrific words were pronounced in our sanctuaries for several years. They were, however, expunged in the reign of Elizabeth; and the measure was the more praiseworthy, because the danger from the Pope's power was then considerable, and because the minds of many persons had not been weaned from the tenets of his Church. Experience had taught moderation; and

having before us this honourable example of a change in our service adapted to circumstances, no teacher of the English Church ought to shrink from stating respectfully his opinion that a further change, by the removal of the rubric which we have been considering, would be neither injurious nor discreditable to our Establishment, in the present state of society. Let us apppeal to facts.

From the reign of Queen Elizabeth to the present hour, has the removal of a very harsh passage from the Litany exposed the Church of England to the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, if such his dominion were, or to his detestable enormities, if such his measures were? I answer, no; and the proper way of counteracting them would be, not by reproaches in our religious service. Again, if the contumelious declaration subjoined to our communion service were a sècond time removed, would the removal now do any more harm than it did before, while Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I. were upon the throne? Would it leave the members of our Church more disposed to adore the sacramental elements, and thus incur among some persons the imputation of idolatry? I answer, that it would not. Some of the clergy read not the contents of the declaration; few of the laity know of its existence; and other means than such a declaration must be employed, if other means be necessary, to preserve our congregations from the errors of the Church of Rome.

The close of our catechism—our twenty-eighth article, which speaks, not of blasphemy uttered,

nor idolatry committed, but of occasion given for many superstitions—our service for the communion—the tenor of our discourses from the pulpit, are in harmony with each other, and form an effectual safeguard for the purity of our faith.

Now, independently of the violence which is done to the testimony of my senses, I confess myself dissatisfied with the arguments which the Romanists adduce, for proving that the substance of the bread and wine is instantaneously, completely, miraculously changed into the substance of Christ's body and Christ's blood, and that his presence in the Sacrament is not only spiritual, but corporeal. I hold, with the Church of England, that Christ is present only in a spiritual sense; and that even this presence is confined to faithful believers. But, while I would set you upon your guard against the erroneous tenets of the Romanists, I would most sincerely discourage the contemptuous taunts and bitter reproaches, which are too often found in the writings and the sermons of Protestant divines. We know that, upon many important points of doctrine, the Lutherans have an equal claim with ourselves to the character of Reformed Christians. We know that in point of numbers the Lutherans, dispersed through Europe, are equal, if not superior, to the members of the English Church. We know that many of them are distinguished by their abilities, by their erudition, by the sincerity of their faith, and by the holiness of their lives. But we also know; and, reflecting upon certain political and religious dissentions which have lately arisen

in this country, we ought most seriously to remember, that the Lutherans hold a doctrine which is equally repugnant with the tenets of the Church of Rome, to the evidence of sight and touch, and equally irreconcileable, as we think, to the authority of Scripture. The Lutherans maintain that there is a real corporeal presence of Christ; and this presence, according to them, consists, not in a *change* of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, but by the immediate and essential *union* of that body and that blood with the bread and wine. The material elements, say they, are not destroyed, as the Romanists suppose them to be, but they remain in their original substance; and, at the same time, other substances are *joined* to them—the substance of the real body and the substance of the real blood of Jesus Christ. We are accustomed to hear a different, and, as I believe, a more rational and a more scriptural interpretation of Christ's words, and in this sound faith we have been educated, and I trust we shall continue to live, and shall die. But, while the Lutherans dissent from us nearly to the same extent with the Romanists, and while they maintain an opinion which seems to us incredible, are we accustomed to enlarge triumphantly and invidiously upon their mistakes? Do we accuse them of voluntary endeavours to corrupt Christianity? Do we load them with loud and vehement imputations of superstition, idolatry, and even blasphemy? Do we accuse them of inconsistency or insincerity, in not opposing, so far as we do, the tenets of the Church of

Rome? Happily, say I, for the Christian world, we do not; and with this plain fact before us, we ought to exercise the same justice and the same candour towards the Romanists. We ought to do so, as men who know the imperfection and fallibility of our common nature. We ought to do so, as Christians, who are peculiarly bounden to the duty of charity in our judgments upon the motives, and conduct of all communities and all individuals, professing themselves the members of Christ's universal Church.

Possible then it is, that the difference of treatment which we show to the Romanists and Lutherans respectively, has arisen from difference in their relative situations towards ourselves. The fact to which I advert deserves examination. The Lutherans have, in England, not been numerous. They have not possessed among us any property as an ecclesiastical body. They have not aimed at any spiritual authority in this kingdom. They have not interfered secretly or openly with its political concerns. To this negative merit they have added the positive praise of active, faithful, intrepid co-operation in the general defence and diffusion of Protestantism. Hence, perhaps, the great teachers of the English Church have treated the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation with lenity, while the doctrine of transubstantiation, as maintained by the Romanists, has again and again been the subject of contemptuous derision, tragical complaint, and declamatory accusation.

The Romanists, on the contrary, were once very

numerous. They had the support of individuals who commanded respect from the amplitude of their wealth, and the antiquity of their descent. They were occasionally seduced and irritated by emissaries, sometimes accredited, and sometimes not accredited by the Court of Rome. Their hopes, their fears, their partialities, and their antipathies were called into action by all the ingenuity of preachers, and all the activity of zealots. Thus, in our conflicts with Romanists, politics in various degrees, and in several reigns, have been blended with theology; and theology took much of its colouring not only from controversial rivalry, but from disappointed ambition and mortified pride. Disputes upon ecclesiastical power were closely connected with struggles for temporal power. The members of the Church of Rome were desirous to recover, and the advocates of the English Church were equally desirous to retain, a very considerable portion of wealth, as well as of influence upon the consciences of their adherents. The freedom of the English constitution would in all probability have been endangered by the re-establishment of Popery. The succession to the throne was, in several instances, dependent on the issue of the contest; and from all these important causes the passions, both of Romish and Protestant ecclesiastics were violently inflamed. Hence they controverted premises; they evaded objections; and pressed against each other invidious consequences. Hence the jealousies and aversions thus stirred up, led both parties to think and speak reproachfully of each other upon doctrinal topics.

Both were unacquainted with the principles of genuine toleration; both had recourse to the utmost severity for the chastisement of what they called heresy; and, adverting to some recent occurrences in this kingdom, I venture to add, that, with the page of history before them, the successors of both would do well to abstain from invective, because the predecessors of both are exposed to retaliation. The records of these troublous times furnish us with few precedents for lenity; and so far as they are examples of rigour, the imitation of them would be restrained by the powerful, and the defence of them would be reprobated by the wise and good.

Happily, the evils, which more than once threatened us in the government both of Church and state, as it is now administered, can scarcely be said to exist; or at least they can be found only by the peering eyes of a polemic in their scattered, decayed, and smothered elements. The claims of an English sovereign to his throne, and his supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, as recognized by the laws, are delineated intelligibly—they are fixed, we trust, immoveably, and the usefulness of that supremacy is seen to consist, not so much in any immediate energies of it when employed by the sovereign, as in the avoidance of those mischiefs which might arise, if it were possessed and exercised by interested, bigoted, or exasperated individuals—by clerical convocations, where members become tumultuous by the contagion of sympathy, or by assemblies entirely laic, which might one day be tranquil and friendly, turbulent and hostile the next, and on

the third, intent upon confiscation as well as oppression. The improvement of the age in criticism, science, and enlarged views of our social rights and social interests, leave far less room for the minds of men to be hood-winked by priests or inflamed by disputants. The Romanists moreover distinguish more accurately and more temperately than did their forefathers between the spiritual and temporal dominion of the venerable personage, who presides over the Church of Rome—they have acquired the power of reconciling their principles as religionists to their reputation, interests, and duties as subjects—instead of favouring, or even listening to those justifications of regicides, which in France produced a Raviliac, and which, in the reign of Elizabeth, were disseminated among our forefathers by wily confessors and mischievous pamphleteers, our contemporaries have consigned them to other classes of men, who, within our own memory, approved themselves adepts in the practice; and I mean royal assassins of royal relatives, discontented nobles, and unprincipled courts of judicature, countenanced by the acclamations of an infuriate rabble. In the absence of political provocations, the animosities of both parties have, by these means, been gradually mitigated. Our legislature wisely and virtuously has in part availed itself of the progressive change. Lenity has not weakened the security of the Church; the success of the experiment will lead, I hope, to an extension of the same goodly expedients; and for all these reasons it is not only weak, but wicked, in Protestants and Romanists, to cherish the same

hatred, and to write with the same acrimony, which in former ages had unfortunately arisen upon such religious questions as ever must divide them upon points of faith.

There is ample room for discussion with candour and decorum. But there is no justifiable plea for the odious imputations, which are reciprocally employed by virulent zealots and domineering dogmatists. As the Church of England, in common with the Church of Rome, lays very great stress upon the celebration of the Sacrament, more especially painful it is, that, upon such a subject, they who read in the Scriptures, which they profess to revere, "that God is love," should lose sight of that charity, which an inspired Apostle has pronounced to be of greater worth than faith or hope.

In regard to the view I have taken of the different effects, which have practically arisen upon questions where the speculative principles of both Lutherans and Romanists are so dissimilar to our own, it may serve to lay open to us the weakness, and, I am compelled to add, the deceitfulness, of the human heart. In religious, as well as other concerns, the motives of men are complex—the predominant are often less perceived than the subordinate; and the polemic expatiates and insists upon ostensible reasons, because he is under a secret conviction, that they are likely to be less popular and more efficacious than the real. In this manner, the support of religion is made the plea, while the gratification of ambition or revenge is the chief object.

If we appeal to the evidence of our senses, or to

the arguments of learned men, who reject the literal, but adopt the figurative interpretation of our Saviour's words at the last supper—if we attend to the declarations of the Church of England, that the sacramental bread and wine after consecration remain still in their very natural substances, and that "the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one"—certainly the tenets of the Lutherans upon the sacramental elements are thus far not more reconcileable to the foregoing circumstances than are those of the Romanists. If the body and blood of Christ are joined to the bread and wine, they are no less upon earth than if the bread and wine were changed into them; and if supposed to be present by the communicant, they, from the very constitution of our minds must, in some degree, be adored. But, as I contended for the Romanist, that he does not adore the bread and wine as such, but the body and blood of Christ into which they are supposed by him to be changed, so I must plead for the Lutheran, that he adores not the unchanged substances of bread and wine as such, but the body and blood of Christ which he believes to be conjoined with them. In speculation, however, I see no ground for charging either of them with idolatry. In my devotions, I should worship neither with one nor the other, and in my general practice I should hold out to both the right hand of fellowship.

I am aware that the Lutherans do not profess, in

common with the Romanists, two additional tenets, that there is a sacramental sacrifice, and that the cup should not be given to the laity. I think those tenets very erroneous; and yet, I do not conceive them to be of such importance as to justify the numerous and odious accusations, which have sometimes been brought against the members of the Church of Rome.

At the same time I cannot help remarking, that the Church of England, neither in the sacramental service, nor in the catechism, nor in the articles, has pronounced any direct and special declaration against a sacrifice repeatedly made at the Lord's supper; but is content with stating, that Christ "by his one oblation of himself once offered upon the cross, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

By these words, I grant, any subsequent sacrifice is virtually and tacitly excluded; but our forefathers having, with their usual seriousness and sincerity, declared their own opinion upon one sacrifice, were restrained by their usual sagacity and discretion, from multiplying disputes by an unnecessary expression of dissent from those who contend for more than one.

Now I rejoice at the fact, that little or no ill-will is entertained by the members of our Church against the Lutherans. I have endeavoured to show the causes of that fact; and as other causes, which formerly produced other sentiments and other measures towards the Romanists seem no

longer to operate, I should wish to encourage towards *them* the same laudable spirit of equity and candour, by which we are influenced towards the Lutherans.

Let us then continue, not only to tolerate, but to respect the Lutheran, who conscientiously holds consubstantiation; and let us also cease to speak scornfully and wrathfully of the Romanist, who, as conscientiously, believes in transubstantiation.

In various parts of this discourse you will perceive that I differ widely from the Church of Rome on several topics relating to the sacrament. That the body and blood of Christ are, in one stage of the ceremony, actually and corporeally present; and that the sacrifice of his death is at another stage, on the pronunciation of certain words by the priest, made again, are doctrines to me quite incredible. But whatever may be my objections to them in speculation, I cannot impute to them in practice the smallest tendency injurious to good morals. If I were asked too, whether the belief of them strengthens the conviction and warms the devotion of Romish communicants, the regard which I owe to truth would compel me to acknowledge, that it really and visibly does produce these effects. Let not the scoffs of the witling, or the fury of the polemic, induce you to imagine that the external devotions of the Romanists are unaccompanied by correspondent feelings in the depths of their souls. If they believe more than we do, it amounts only to error; if we believe less than they do, it does not amount to impiety. As to superstition, it ought

not to be charged upon them for the reason which is generally alleged; because avowedly, and in point of fact, as I told you, the Romanist does not worship the material and external elements, not having undergone an essential, complete preternatural change; nor does he, upon this subject, employ the distinction, for which he elsewhere contends, between what are technically denominated λατρεία, or the greater adoration paid to the Deity, δουλεία, or the less adoration paid to saints; and ὑπερδουλεία, or a degree of adoration surpassing δουλεία, and paid to the Virgin Mary, as the mother of God.* But, on the other hand, it were gross prevarication for you and myself to make a tenet, which appears to us false, the *ground-work for our love of God*, who in mercy to us, sent his son into the world; and for our gratitude to Christ, who became obedient to the will of his Father by death upon the cross. The service, however, prescribed by the Church of England, will not be debased by comparison with the ritual established by the Romanists; and upon points about which we are agreed, our venerable forefathers have, in some instances, wisely adopted a part of its impressive phraseology. Thus in the canon of the mass the priest says of himself, "May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting."—He says, "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to everlasting life."—Upon distributing the consecrated particles to the

* See Bishop Jeremy Taylor's Dissuasive from Popery, sec. xii. part i. p. 134; sect. viii. part i. p. 52; and p. 138 of 2d book of quarto edition.

communicants, he says, "May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul to everlasting life."

As the cup is not administered to the Romanist laity, the priest cannot use the same form which we use in our Church.

Spreading his hands over the oblation he says, "Who the day before he suffered took bread into his holy and venerable hands, and with his eyes lifted up towards heaven, giving thanks to Thee, Almighty God, his Father: he blessed, brake, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat ye all of this, for this is my body.'"

In the elevation of the host there is some variation and some resemblance.

"In like manner," says the priest, "after he had supped, Christ taking also this excellent chalice into his holy and venerable hands, giving thee also thanks, blessed and gave it to his disciples, saying: 'Take and drink ye all of this, for this is the chalice of my blood of the New and eternal Testament: the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you, and for many, to the remission of sins. As often as you do these things, you shall do them in remembrance of me.'"*

Here I must observe, in passing, that the word *mystery*, which the Church of Rome applies to the secret and miraculous change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, is not found in any manuscript whatsoever, Greek or Latin. It is not

* See Gandolphy's Exposition of the Roman Catholic Liturgy, pp. 216—224.

inserted by the Romanists in the text of their Vulgate. It partly rests upon oral tradition, and partly it is illustrated by three marginal quotations; one upon Matthew xxvi. from Ambrose, in his treatise concerning those who are initiated in the Mysteries, or Sacred Rites of the Church; one upon Mark xiv. from the same work of St. Ambrose; a third upon Luke xxii. from St. Ambrose; together with a fourth from the Homily of St. Eusebius on the Passover.*

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* In the margin of the Vulgate, on the 26th of St. Matthew, there is the following quotation from Ambrose.

"Vera utique caro Christi, quæ crucifixa est, quæ sepulta est, verè ergo carnis illius sacramentum est. Ipse clamat Dominus Jesus—hoc est corpus meum. Ante benedictionem verborum cœlestium alia species nominatur, post consecrationem corpus Christi significatur. Ipse dicit sanguinem suum. Ante consecrationem aliud dicitur, post consecrationem sanguinis nuncupatur.—Ambro. de iis, qui initiantur Mysteriis, cap. 9.

In the margin of the Vulgate upon Mark xiv. they quote from Ambrose these words:

"Antequam consecretur, panis est, ubi autem verba accesserint Christi, corpus est Christi. Deinde audi dicentem: hoc est corpus meum. Ante verba Christi, calix est vini et aquæ plenus, ubi verba Christi operata fuerint, ibi sanguis efficitur, qui plebem redemit. Ergo videte quantis generibus potens est sermo Christi universa convertere."—Ambro. de Sacrament. lib. iv. cap. 5.

"Nam sacramentum istud quod accipis, Christi sermone conficitur. Quod si tantum valuit sermo Eliæ ut ignem de cœlo deponeret, non valebit Christi sermo ut species mutet elementorum?"—Idem, de iis qui Mysteriis initiantur, cap. 9, et seq.

There is a third quotation from the same work of St. Ambrose, together with one from the Homily of St. Eusebius on the Passover, in the margin of the Vulgate upon Luke xxii.

To many readers the words of St. Ambrose and Eusebius may appear enthusiastic effusions of rhetoric, rather than precise statements of doctrine. In vindication of such an important word upon such a solemn occasion, the ablest champions of the Church of Rome have often been perplexed, and Protestants are well justified in rejecting it, as wholly unsupported by any various readings in the MSS. of the Sacred Text, as constituting an almost unparalleled innovation, and as insufficient to sustain the weight of a stupendous paradox.

I now pass on to other matters in the Roman Communion Service.

The Romanists say, as we do, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabaoth," and they add, as we do

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"Quia corpus assumptum ablaturus erat ex oculis nostris, et sideribus illaturus, necessarium erat, ut nobis in hac die sacramentum corporis et sanguinis sui consecraret: ut coleretur jugiter per mysterium quod semel offerebatur in pretium: ut quia quotidiana et indefessa currebat pro hominum salute redemptio, perpetua esset etiam redemptionis oblatio, et perennis illa victima viveret in memoria, ut semper esset præsens in gratia."—Euseb. Emis. Hom. 5. de Pascha.

"Si operatus est sermo cœlestis in fonte terreno, et, in aliis rebus, non operatur in cœlestibus sacramentis? Ergo didicisti quòd ex pane corpus fiat Christi, et quòd vinum et aqua in calicem mittitur, sed fit sanguis consecratione verbi cœlestis. Sed forte dicis: speciem sanguinis non video. Sed habet similitudinem. Sicut enim mortis similitudinem sumpsisti, ita etiam similitudinem pretiosi sanguinis bibis, ut nullus horror cruoris sit, et pretium tamen operetur redemptionis. Didicisti ergo quia quod accipis est corpus Christi."—Ambr. de Sacra. lib. iv. cap. 4.

not, Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he that "comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest."

In the Book of Common Prayer, and of Administration of Sacraments for the use of all Christians in the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, published by Mr. Gandolphy in 1812 (page 180); and in a Roman Missal for the use of the laity, containing the Masses appointed to be used throughout the year, and published 1815, we have (page 18), word for word, the same glowing and sublime doxology, which in the Church of England's service thus begins—"Glory be to God on high," &c.

You here see proofs of my assertion, that the Church of England has impartially and deliberately selected many devotional passages for the Lord's supper from the sacramental service of the Romanists. We hear them attentively, or we repeat them reverently.

But let me now do to our own Establishment the same justice, which I should ever wish to be done to the Romanists. Unincumbered by, what we think, mystical propositions and fantastic ceremonies, our communion office sets before you the very words of Christ himself. It leads you to assign to those words a figurative sense, which evidently was not mistaken by his disciples, and which is easily understood at least by believers in all succeeding ages, though by some classes of them it be rejected to make room for the literal interpretation. The same office, you well know, is favourable to virtue

as well as to religion. It teaches you to unite thanksgiving with faith—it insists upon the necessity of repentance—it enforces the exercise of charity—it tells you that, "at all times, and in all places, it is very meet, right, and your bounden duty to give glory to our Holy Father, to the Lord Most High, to the Almighty everlasting God." Can language be more luminous, more emphatical, more worthy of attention and assent from rational beings, or more adapted to the Majesty, and infinite perfections of our Creator, Preserver, moral Governor and Judge?

Now, amidst great variety of belief, and great asperity of disputation, there is one point upon which all parties are really and avowedly agreed. Whether there be or there be not any transmutation of the elements into the body and blood of Christ—whether there be or be not any union of them with the bread and wine—whether the sacrament be or be not, as a very illustrious divine* of our own church imagines, a feast upon the sacrifice, by which the communion of the body and blood of Christ unites the receivers into one body by the distribution of one common benefit; yet, all communicants believe, and all declare, that the participation of the sacrament is commemorative; they all understand the words of Christ, "Do this in remembrance of me;" they all acknowledge the obligation which lies upon them to obey that command; they, one and all, intend to obey that command when they meet together at the communion table. And here

* Cudworth.

let it not be said, that our view of the subject is narrow, is uninteresting, is unprofitable. There is no ground for such a charge; and you will see this when you reflect upon what is passing in your own minds. Shall you and I be told, that the patience of Jesus Christ, when he was betrayed by Judas, vilified by the Jewish priests, and insulted by the Roman soldiers—that his calm and unshaken courage when he bore witness to the truth, upon which he had been interrogated by Pilate—that his resignation to the appointments of his Father, when, after supplicating that the cup, if it were possible, might pass from him, he adds, "Thy will, not mine, be done"—that his fortitude under the protracted pains of death—that his placability and benevolence, when amidst these dreadful trials, he with his last breath poured forth a prayer and an apology for his murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"—shall we be told that, in a scene where so many awful, and so many alarming circumstances are crowded together, there is not much to exercise the noblest powers of the understanding—much to call into action the best feelings of our hearts—much to strengthen our faith—much to animate our hopes—much to enlarge and to invigorate our charity—much to purify and exalt our piety? My brethren, all these precious spiritual advantages are within your reach, when, in this sanctuary, you commemorate the meritorious cross and passion of Jesus Christ. Here you have no mystery to perplex your understandings—you have no superstition to break down your spirits—you have

no fanaticism to bewilder your imaginations. The facts are intelligible, they are credible, they cannot fail to interest you—they have a direct and visible tendency to edify you in all the possible graces of the Christian character.

Must I not then, as a pastor commissioned to guide you in the path which leads to everlasting life, and to encourage you by the mercies, rather than to alarm you by the terrors, of the Lord; must I not deplore the influence of the reasons which prevent too many of you from coming to the Lord's supper? Well has it been said of you, that the excuses upon which you rely will not be accepted before God. There are, I grant, many well-meaning Christians, who unfeignedly distrust their power to persevere in executing those purposes of amendment, which they are directed to form when they drink of the sacramental cup. I give them credit for their humility; and at the same time I warn them of the danger which they incur by not summoning more fortitude, and not ascertaining by experiment how far, with the assistance of Heaven, they may be enabled to make gradual, and ultimately effectual advances in spiritual amendment. There is another, and a less praiseworthy class of men, who, not having tried the effect of communicating, acquire an habitual indifference to the subject, and console themselves by the consideration, that in the general course of their actions they are not worse than other men who *do* communicate; and to such men I would say, that in deciding upon the comparative merits of themselves

and their fellow-creatures, there is always danger of unfairness, because the same person is a party and a judge—danger of error, because we must have a clearer knowledge of our own faults than of the faults of others—danger of uncharitableness in censuring them, and danger of delusion from self-love and self-conceit when we decide in favour of our own spiritual equality, even if we do not presume to give credit to ourselves for superiority;—admitting, in the way of supposition, what in itself must often be doubtful, that such men as do not communicate are, upon the whole, more sinful than others who *do* communicate. I would further say to them, that whether worse or not, than their neighbours, they might be better than themselves in their present condition, if they would avail themselves of those dissuasives from sin, and those incitements to righteousness, which are suggested by the very pious service prescribed by our church. There is another, and a very blameable set of men, who have not the praise of humility on the ground of possible incapacity to repent; but who, discerning the self-denial and the self-command which are necessary to reformation, deliberately avoid the struggle, and are content with thinking that, to the guilt of continuing in a vicious course, they have not added the guilt of violating the promise, which, as communicants, they are required to make for the abandonment of their favourite and inveterate vices. To another class of men I cannot advert without deep concern and strong disapprobation. They know that they will be required to declare themselves in a

state of charity with their neighbours. But they have many secret misgivings of heart, that they are to meet at the sacramental table those neighbours whose peace of mind they have disturbed, whose characters they have slandered, or whose rights they have invaded. But they do not put forth one effort to correct the malignant passions which are rankling in their bosoms; they do not form even one wish to restore what they have unjustly taken, or to retract what they have falsely and spitefully spoken. Yet they think themselves obliged to partake of the Lord's supper: and they vainly imagine that, without any alteration in their present temper or their future conduct, they may, by mere change of place, render themselves worthy communicants. Disgusted we should be at the absurdity and fallacy of this reasoning, if we were not shocked at the uncharitableness and impiety which accompany it. By such prevarication an envious, an oppressive, a vindictive wretch may, for a season, delude and even tranquillize his own mind. But he cannot alter the essential properties of right and wrong—he cannot make a safe compromise between his rooted malice and his perverted conscience—he cannot satisfy his discerning fellow-creatures— he cannot propitiate his omniscient and righteous God. Sincere then is my petition unto Almighty God our Heavenly Father, that all who now hear me may have a better mind, and earnestly consider the emptiness of those excuses which, however they may now confide in them, may pierce their hearts with anguish at the awful hour of death.

Fortunately, I am not called upon to exhort a class of men who, in this and other countries, formerly annoyed the sober-minded, and disgusted the learned by the wildness of their whimsies, and the turbulence of their spirit. They not only neglected but opposed the celebration of the Lord's supper, and maintained that the participation of it was to be even shunned till there should arrive the age of the Holy Ghost, when, said they, "all human learning shall cease, and all external ordinances and institutions shall vanish." If these men were living, as happily they are not, I should tell them that when St. Paul delivered to the Corinthians what he had received himself of the Lord, that they were to eat the bread and to drink the wine in remembrance of Christ, and that, as often as they eat that bread, and drank that cup, they did show the Lord's death till he came, that is, till his second coming at the end of the world, he plainly meant, that participation in the Lord's supper was obligatory upon all ages, and that all persons were required to partake of it often. I should also tell them from the New Testament—from the language of Christ and his Apostles—from the practice of themselves, of their converts, of the primitive Christians, and of our national churches in succeeding generations, it is plain that prayer and outward teaching, and the use of the sacrament, are alike intended to continue, as means of our spiritual improvement, while we remain on this side the grave.*

In the present state of the Christian world, it

* See Tillotson's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 129.

behoves me to warn you against one more excuse, which may sometimes beguile persons not wholly depraved. We meet, it has been said, with numerous instances in which they, who come to the Lord's table show in their actions, the scanty and transient efficacy which accompanies this act of external devotion. Be it so, but no man, conscious of his frailties, will dare to affirm that he might not have been worse, if he had absented himself from the Lord's supper entirely. No man will take upon himself to deny, that for some escapes from temptation, or some advance, however inconsiderable, in righteousnes, he was in some degree indebted to the seriousness of thought which he felt from the solemnity of the sacramental service and from sympathy with his relatives, or his friends, or his neighbours who attended it. No man, I believe, ever attempted to justify, or even extenuate his relapse into sin, or his perseverance in it, on the ground that he had regularly partaken of the sacrament; for such prostitution of a most holy rite would surely be infatuation and frenzy in the sight of man, and would amount to hypocrisy combined with presumption before that God, who has declared by the mouth of his prophets, that he desireth mercy more than burnt offerings, and hath less delight in sacrifice than in obedience to his voice.

To conclude, the result of the statements and observations already laid before you is this—I have seen no man, who, either in health or sickness, in prosperity or adversity, ever blamed himself for having eaten of the sacred bread, or for having drunken of the sacred

wine in thankful and dutiful remembrance of his Saviour. But I have frequently been summoned to the offices of an adviser and comforter to those persons who, on the near approach of their dissolution, have with anguish confessed to me their former neglect, and who were anxious to expiate it by one penitential and devotional act before they should go hence, and be no more seen. I have approved of their resolution, and I have assisted in their prayers. But what, if the hand of death should be stretched over us? What, if the palsy or apoplexy should have destroyed our senses? What, if the pangs of a burning fever should agitate our spirits into frenzy? What, if bodily weakness should have benumbed our feelings, and darkened our reason before that one act can be performed? Do I then maintain, that he who has never attended at the Lord's table must be consigned to perdition in a future world? I do not say this. I admit that he may be saved, because in the general tenor of his life he has many virtues and few faults. But I further say, that by continued absence from the Lord's supper, he has forfeited the benefit of one very practicable and very efficacious mean for the improvement and final acceptance of those virtues, and for the correction and final pardon of those faults. I say, that he has not obeyed a plain and positive precept, recommended by the example of the Apostolic age, and of all succeeding times, among all succeeding sects of Christians, except one—I mean our brethren who are usually called Quakers, and whose proficiency in the practical parts of reli-

gion is conspicuous and highly meritorious. I have to add, that he, in all probability, was led to withhold that obedience by groundless scruples, or by criminal inconsiderateness.

Finally, let me remind you of a general and interesting fact, that in this, and almost every other parish, they who frequently communicate are distinguished by temperance, peaceableness, probity, and other social excellencies; that they must have derived valuable assistance for attaining those excellencies from the sacred truths which are set before them at the Lord's supper; and that every good Christian therefore would be anxious to be found in the number of those believers, whom participation in the Lord's supper has awakened to repentance, or confirmed in virtue, or animated to piety. I entreat you then to meditate seriously upon these most important questions, and to supplicate the Almighty that no frivolous and hollow excuses may, in your last moments, expose you to a situation not indeed hopeless, but certainly in some degree perilous. When God calleth you, strive to be ready. Do what you are required to do by the Scriptures, and the rules of our excellent Church, in remembrance of Jesus Christ. Repent ye of your former sins; resolve upon amendment for the future; cherish a spirit of unfeigned charity towards your neighbours; and thus, most assuredly, you will be meet partakers of the Holy Communion.

# SERMON XXVII.

LUKE xxii. 19, 20.

*And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me.*

*Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

ON a former occasion I told you that in my second Discourse I should explain to you three very significant words—Sacrament, Mystery, and Eucharist—which are connected with my subject; and in a third I shall address myself to a numerous but misguided class of Christians, who will do well to attend to me, when I am endeavouring to rectify their habitual, and, I had almost said, their venial mistakes upon the qualifications proper for a pious remembrance of their Saviour at the Lord's Supper.

Antecedently, however, to any exposition of the three terms just now mentioned, I must admit that Lutherans, Romanists, and the members of the Church of England, upon whose tenets I shall have occasion to comment in the course of that exposition, are respectively desirous to be guided into the way of truth. But here I feel myself irresistibly led into a train of reflections not unworthy of your

notice, because they have a tendency to show the propriety of that dispassionate and conciliatory spirit, which I am most anxious to preserve and recommend in all discussions upon the Lord's Supper. In controversies upon science and literature, men of enlarged minds are generally content to refute without arrogance, and to be refuted without rage; and unless the personal feelings of disputants are violated, they are content to leave the issue of the contest upon the strength and the skill, which they may have employed upon their own side of a question. We have little hesitation in sparing the vanquished enemy of our country. We think it meritorious to forgive a personal foe. But to our heated imagination it seems criminal to extend our lenity to the opponent of our religion; and as that opponent is actuated by the same feelings, accusations are hurled and retorted in endless succession. Revenge assumes the form of justice, and intolerance is sheltered under the disguise of zeal in a good cause. But whence then has it arisen, that amidst the violence of men upon politics, and upon other topics, in which their ambition and their selfishness are interested, theological hatred exceeds that violence, and from its intenseness and its frequency has become proverbial? It has been said, that in spite of all their positiveness, theologians have a secret and restless distrust in their own persuasion; and that they borrow from their passions that ardour, which their reason cannot supply. This solution, though much exaggerated, is, in part, true: but it is not complete, and we must look for other causes. In all

inquiries upon the dispensation, and, so far as we can collect, the purposes of the Deity in his moral government, there are difficulties which the limited faculties of man cannot wholly surmount. But our belief in that which is clear will be, and ought to be, accompanied by hesitation and doubt in that which is obscure; and most certainly such doubt is compatible with sincerity and seriousness. What, in most cases, have we before us but probabilities, which strike different minds with different degrees of force, and which are surveyed through different mediums from fortuitous circumstances? Education, example, familiar intercourse with teachers and their followers, greater or less degrees of discernment, more or fewer opportunities for investigation, ever have given, and ever will give, rise to diversity of opinion. From the acknowledged importance of the subject itself, we are impatient of suspense, and gladly seize upon every proof on which we can repose with some confidence. We are unwilling for that repose to be disturbed. Confused and indistinct apprehensions arise within us upon the possible effects, which the admission of tenets, hitherto rejected, may have upon our spiritual interests. The sceptic upon our creed is thus transformed into the enemy of our salvation; and by a rapid transition, the enemy of our salvation appears to us an impugner of our Church, a deceitful handler of the word of God, or even a scorner of the Deity. We then stand justified to ourselves for unrestrained zeal in vindicating his honour as inseparably connected with our own belief, and tri-

umphantly we say, in the language of the Psalmist, "Do we not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee!" Here then you see how many delusions lend their aid to the passions of polemics.

As to the difficulties of which I spoke as attendant upon our researches in religion, they, by a kind of instinctive force, seize our attention, from their remote or near relation to our sense of duty; they are inevitable; they are numerous; under some aspects, and to some extent, they are insuperable, and yet they ought to operate, not as discouragements from exertion, but as cautions against rashness. All endeavours, therefore, to overcome the impediments which keep certainty beyond our reach, but facilitate our approach to probability, are accompanied by self-approbation; and the solution of doubts, though it be slow and imperfect, will, in some degree, promote our improvement as rational and moral agents. It is by experiments only that we learn to distinguish what is, and what is not, within the grasp of our intellect, and the very process which convinces us of our partial ignorance rarely fails to carry with it some useful addition to the stock of our knowledge.

Happy then it is, where men by effort have acquired, and by habit retain, such self-command as leads them to attend impartially to every pertinent argument, which can be adduced in opposition to their own tenets, although they have been carefully adopted and honestly professed. Distrust itself, if it goes no farther, is favourable to the progressive discovery of truth. It prevents alike precipitate

decision and precipitate change. It produces, not blind obstinacy, but well-regulated firmness in that belief, which hitherto has appeared to us well-founded. It will make us humble from a sense of our own fallibility. It will make us candid, because other men are fallible; and I think it a criminal perversion of terms to ascribe such humility and such candour to indifference, to inconstancy, or to lurking infidelity. But whence, it may be asked, proceeds that state of mind, in which, even upon topics which men generally allow to be, in some respects, inscrutable, they are intemperate and arrogant, so far as their own particular opinions upon those topics are concerned? Much, I think, is to be ascribed to intellectual pride; and thence it has often happened, that writers, who, in the first statement of their opinion, were cool and fair, have been provoked in the course of their controversy, and have contracted a habit of dogmatizing from which they were formerly exempt. Impatience of contradiction begets a proneness to contradict. That impatience and that proneness are followed by confidence of success. That confidence generates a spirit of proselytism. That spirit admits no compromise with qualified or unqualified opposition, measures its own strength by the issue of its own exertions, and in the number of proselytes discovers additional evidence for the superior merit of its own cause.

Thus polemics defend, they oppose, they gradually believe of themselves all the favourable representations, which are made of their talents by their

admirers—they become, not only the champions, but ultimately the leaders of a party, and having gained authority over opinion by their learning, or their acuteness, or their ardour, they will not hazard the slightest portion of it by concession to other disputants.

There is further danger from another species of pride, which peculiarly and notoriously breaks out upon religious subjects—I mean, spiritual pride. It is delightful for us to suppose that we have a deeper insight than other men into the will of the Deity. It is delightful for us to have credit for superior sanctity; and it often happens that without any direct consciousness of presumption, we think better of ourselves, because other men are disposed to think and to speak well of us. It is delightful for us to act, not upon what we think the weak credulity, but the well-founded confidence of our fellow-creatures; and of the satisfaction which arises from spiritual dominion we have an extraordinary proof, even in cases where that dominion was exercised to convince others, while we are ourselves unconvinced. We are told of a Jesuit Missionary,* that upon being asked why he was ready to give up his time, his talents, his comforts, and even his life, in the defence of opinions which he did not believe, he replied, "All these advantages are well sacrificed to the luxury of governing the will and the judgments of thousands and tens of thousands." Such a man will naturally resist every attempt to deprive

* See D'Alembert's History of Jesuits.

him of that luxury, and will hate his fellow-creatures, not as opponents to his opinions, but as rivals to his power.

But there are other causes to which we may ascribe the fierceness of theological animosity, and their operation is no less unperceived by the agent than is the occasional unsteadiness of belief, to which more efficacy has been ascribed than facts will warrant. Our opinions from external circumstances often become gradually blended with our secular interests; and while we are aiming at popularity, or profit, or honour, we suppose ourselves to be the advocates of truth, and without any immediate consciousness of insincerity, we eagerly employ every argument favourable to our cause, and we even cherish, not only dissent, but dislike, towards other men, who hold other opinions, and whose success would counteract all the complex motives by which we are actuated. The vigilance, and the craftiness of rulers points out certain disputants as useful auxiliaries for decoying men by false lights, or immersing them in dark ignorance, or scaring them into abject submission—auxiliaries, in persuading them, that inquiry will lead, not only to error, but even to impiety—auxiliaries, in pointing out to them both the duty and the safety of believing all that they are required to believe—auxiliaries, to deter them from lending an ear to what they call the fallacious reasonings and the mischievous views, either of sceptics, who are indifferent to truth and falsehood, or of sophists, who

are prone to display their ingenuity, in putting sweet for bitter, and bitter for sweet.

In some or all of the particulars just now enumerated, we can trace the origin, and the virulence, and the stubbornness of theological hatred. But surely it well becomes us to consider, that upon no subjects whatsoever is self-conceit so dangerous, and self-love so deceitful, as upon those speculative questions which are left in obscurity by the wise and the righteous appointment of the Deity; and which, in consequence of such obscurity, were probably intended to exercise at once our diligence, our humility, and the best of our social affections.

Most assuredly the real interests of religion, as a rule of life, never were promoted eventually by the fierceness and the intolerance of religious Teachers; and if they were to examine what passes in their own minds when they are treated with insolence and harshness, which they think unmerited, they must instantly see that the same treatment must act as strong impediments against the adoption of those truths which they are themselves unfeignedly desirous to disseminate, for the spiritual welfare of their fellow-creatures.

Thus inquiries into the nature and end of the Sacrament seem, from the acknowledged importance of the subject, to exact the greatest moderation; and both the variety and the pertinacity of men's opinions furnish a strong presumption that all parties are solicitous to know the real meaning of the institution, and to perform worthily the devotional services by which it is observed. On

the other hand, invectives may inflame, but cannot edify our well-wishers—they exasperate, but do not convince well-informed and well-meaning dissentients. They always aggravate the mischiefs of error, and always sully the lustre of truth itself. Rarely do they forward the speculative belief of the Gospel, and in practice they never promote the influence of its benevolent spirit. They may gratify the pride or the spleen of the controversialist; but they impede the progress of mankind in those virtuous habits and principles upon the usefulness of which there is no room for scepticism, and the cultivation of which is manifestly recommended by the authority of religion, both natural and revealed.

Wishing to act, as well as to exhort, and therefore endeavouring to avoid every appearance of resemblance to the dictatorial polemic and the virulent accuser, I shall now more immediately enter upon the explanation of the three terms which, as I told you, are closely connected with our subject. Believing that all my hearers feel great reverence for the Sacrament itself, and knowing that many of you receive it from the very best intentions, I shall convey to you some useful instruction by full explanation of the word itself.

That word is supposed to be borrowed from the military language of the Romans, and applied to the religious worship of Christians. The Roman soldier took an oath of fidelity and obedience to his general, and this oath was signified by the word sacrament, a word, which by classical writers in the Latin language is not used to denote any other kind of oath,

however solemn. Christians are supposed, when taking what we call the Sacrament, to bind themselves to their Master, Christ: and the term is much illustrated by allusion to another ceremony, which by the Romans, as I told you, was considered as of high importance. But as the word Sacrament, even among earlier and later Christians, bears various significations, and has given rise to various disputes, I think it proper to lay before you some of the senses, in which it has been occasionally employed. You will find great latitude in the application of it by different writers to different subjects. Lactantius, a most learned and eloquent father of the Church, is peculiar in his use of the term to signify some sacred mystery. In book ii. cap. 19, he mentions * the Sacrament of Man, or human nature, by which he means, the wonderful structure of man in his moral and in his rational powers.

Again,† he says, "He who would be wise and happy, let him hear the word of God, let him learn justice, let him know the Sacrament or mystery of nativity, i. e. know the being by whose will he was born and created."

Tertullian, whose eloquence, though not polished, is most animated, employs the word sacrament with extraordinary variety. "Waging war," says he, "in defence of this oath of fidelity to Christ, I am chal-

* Quicumque igitur sacramentum hominis tueri, rationemque naturæ, suæ nititur obtinere, ipse se ab humo suscitet, et erectâ mente oculos suos tendat in cœlum. Lactantius, l. ii. c. 19.

† Cap. xxx. book iii. De falsa sapientia Philosophorum.

lenged by his enemies." (p. 490.) In this passage Tertullian alludes to the military sense of the word among the Romans, which I just now mentioned.

He calls dreams sacraments (p. 270); and by the expression affixes to them a kind of sanctity, as did the Greeks, of whom the oldest writer tells us that a dream is from Jove.*

He calls the interpretations of dreams sacraments. (p. 548.)

Paul, says he, understands all the sacraments; by which he means Paul understands all mysteries, or Christian doctrines, which were not known before the Christian Declaration. (p. 339.)

He speaks of the Jewish sacrament (p. 18), and he means their sacred ceremonies, to none of which, in the ordinary language of Christians, it is applied.

He three times speaks of the sacrament of water (pp. 26, 229, 224), by which he means the water used in baptism.

He mentions the sacraments of water, oil, and bread (p. 39); and the word oil is used by the Romanists for their sacrament of unction: as by water he means water employed in baptism, and by bread he means the consecrated bread at the Lord's Supper.

"Satan," says he, "affects the Sacraments," i. e. the holy doctrines of God. (p. 524.)

He speaks of the Sacraments of the Paschal Lamb. (p. 457.) And yet the Old Testament does not describe the Passover as a Sacrament.

He speaks of the Sacrament of the Christian Religion. (p. 414.)

* Καὶ γάρ τ' ὄναρ ἐκ Διός ἐστι.—IL.

He again mentions the Sacrament of Unction (p. 517): and this, as I told you just now, is the language of the Church of Rome, not of our own.

He calls monogamy a Sacrament. (p. 531.)

He mentions the Sacrament of the Resurrection. (p. 337.)

He speaks of the Sacrament of the Salvation of Mankind, i. e. the sacred docrine of the salvation of mankind. (p. 396.)

He speaks of the Sacrament of Allegory (p. 465), which surely is a far fetched sense of the term.

He speaks of the Sacrament of Faith. (pp. 229 and 264.)

He speaks of the Sacrament of the Body of Christ. (p. 408.)

He speaks of the Sacrament of the Name of Christ. (p. 401.)

He speaks of the Sacrament of the Cross. (pp. 196 and 406.)

He calls a parable a Sacrament. (pp. 561 and 562.)

When Christ forbad us to throw pearls before swine, "he spake," says Tertullian, "openly and without any intimation of a hidden Sacrament.

The imagination of Tertullian was vivid, his piety was ardent, and hence it was, that to objects which he conceived to be of high importance, whether they were doctrines, or ceremonies, or facts, he applied, what appeared to him the very significant term Sacrament.

Let us turn to Jerome, a Christian father, whose learning was greater than Tertullian's, and whose enthusiasm was less extravagant.

"The Sacrament," says Jerome, "of the old, i. e. the Jewish Laws, does not justify."*

"The Sacraments of God are," he elsewhere says, "to preach, to bless, to confirm, to administer the Communion, to visit the sick, to pray."†

He says also: "To celebrate the Sacraments of Christ, is to hear the word of Christ, and to keep it." And here, you will observe, Jerome applies to all our Christian duties the word which, among Protestants, is confined to two external rites.

In the Catechism of our Church, both Baptism and the Lord's Supper are called Sacraments ordained by Christ; and yet, in the ordinary phraseology of Christians themselves, Baptism very rarely, but the Lord's Supper always, are denoted by that appellation.

I shall introduce into my enumeration of the Christain Fathers the learned St. Austin.

He speaks of the Sacrament of the Scriptures — the Sacrament of the Eucharist — the Sacrament of Regeneration—the Sacraments or oaths by which Christians are bound to Christ — the Sacraments of the Old and New Testaments — the Sacraments of the Old and New Law. He explains why the burthens of the Sacraments, by which he means ceremonial observances, of the Old Law, were many. He states that the Sacraments of the New Law are very few, very easy, and most excellent.

"Peter and Judas," says he, "gave one and the same Sacrament, or pledge of fidelity."

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* Tom. ii. vide Index. † Tom. ix. 50.

He speaks of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist.

Let me conclude with Arnobius, whose erudition and eloquence entitle him to notice.

Arnobius says, . . . . . acted up to the Sacraments or solemn pledge of the truth, i. e. of the Gospel.*

Thus you see the latitude, with which the word sacrament is used by the most celebrated fathers of the Christian Church. We are under no obligation to imitate them, and at the same time, we have no right to condemn them; because, in all their various applications of the word, they meant to point out the important and sacred nature of the subjects upon which they employed it. Here, my brethren, it is highly proper to remind you that the word is not of divine, but of human origin. It occurs not even once in the preaching of our Lord, nor in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in any one of the Epistles of the New Testament. It is not to be found in any Christian writer of the first or second centuries. It was probably employed and probably used by the Christians, when, availing themselves of the marked signification which it bore in the military art of the Romans, the Christians transferred it to the hallowed doctrines and discipline of their own religion; and we shall presently see a similar origin of another word, in which the phraseology of the Greeks was carried over to two particular rites, which the Christians revered highly,

* Veritatis sacramenta patefecit. P. 3.

and observed solemnly. In descending to later ages, we shall find considerable difference of opinion among Christians upon the proper and improper application of the word. I hold, however, that we ought always to look upon the definition of the word, as quite arbitrary, and that every religious community has an equal authority to define it according to their own views of the conformity, which their respective tenets and discipline may have to the precepts of the Gospel; and never let it be forgotten, that the term itself, as I told you, is not found in holy writ, and therefore, that men must be left to their own judgements and their own conscience in giving a larger or narrower extent to what they would call sacraments.

The Church of Rome contends for seven sacraments, that is to say, baptism, the Lord's supper, extreme unction, holy orders, matrimony, confirmation, penance.

As to one of them, penance, our Church, so far from considering it a sacrament, has not provided for it any particular form of devotion; it belongs to juridical or pastoral discipline rather than to doctrine or worship; and whether it be private, or public, or solemn, it is used only as an ecclesiastical punishment, which affects the penitent.*

Our Church totally omits extreme unction; but it has appointed religious services for holy orders, for confirmation, and for matrimony; and at the same time it does not assign to them the properties

* See Burnet, vol. iii. p. 73.

of a sacrament, which, according to the definition which they have adopted, must have a visible sign or ceremony ordained of God, and such a sign our forefathers ascribed to baptism and the Lord's supper exclusively. For baptism therefore and the supper of the Lord, it has ascribed special and appropriate services, and such as correspond with the definition which includes the condition of a visible sign or ceremony ordained of God. Thus far, the definition is correct, for the sign in baptism is water, which, not Christ indeed, for he never baptized, but which the Apostles used for converts, whom they had been commissioned to baptize and to disciple (for that is a more proper word than *teach)* in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and the sign in the Lord's supper is bread and wine, of which our Lord himself partook at the original institution of what is now called the Sacrament. When our ecclesiastical rulers prepared a catechism for the instruction of the young we must suppose, that they would not omit what seemed to them material, nor connive at what they thought pernicious; yet abstaining here from censure upon the five Sacraments, which, in the preparation of articles for public and learned teachers they reject, in the catechism they temperately and prudently are content with saying, that Christ ordained only two Sacraments as generally necessary to salvation, and they specify them by their two names. Surely then, as five of the Sacraments are tacitly rejected rather than expressly reprobated—surely then, the difference of opinion between

ourselves and the Romanists is quite compatible with sincerity and seriousness in both; and while the faith and the devotion of both carry with them these two properties, deeply am I concerned that such difference should not only have occasioned bitterness of temper and asperity of language, but, as we know from the melancholy history of our own country, have brought down upon many conscientious Protestants a sentence of condemnation to the flames.

Bishop Taylor calls the doctrine of the Seven Sacraments, not an impious superstition, but an unnecessary and an unscholastic paradox. Now, to those who look upon the five Sacraments, which we reject, as supported by the written Gospels and those oral traditions, which to them are jointly the measure of faith, the belief of that doctrine would not be unnecessary, and the disbelief of them would be inconsistent. Again, I cannot agree with the learned and pious prelate, when he calls the doctrine unscholastic. It has been maintained by the most able schoolmen, and many of the arguments alleged for it are derived from the discussions and expressed in the language of the schools. If that doctrine therefore corresponds with the arbitrary definition of a Sacrament, as a genus, and constitutes one of the species included under it, then surely, no violence is done to the principles of legitimate reasoning, where the conclusions flow, as I think they do, from the premises. Granted it must be by Protestants that the premises are not accompanied by sufficient proofs to support their truth; but the conclusion

will be just, though the premises may be faulty; and they who see no faultiness in those premises are evidently bounden to regulate their actions in conformity to the conclusions. As to the word *paradox*, it is ambiguous: sometimes, it signifies a proposition, which though at first view improbable, is in reality true; and sometimes it signifies a specious and singular appearance of truth in that which is false. I know not which of these two meanings were in the mind of Bishop Taylor when he wrote the passage which I just now quoted to you; nor would any advantage arise from the determination of the question. It is enough for us to say with our Church, that Christ has ordained two Sacraments only as necessary to salvation; and to leave our Christian brethren to their own faith about the five other Sacraments, upon which our Protestant forefathers have not propounded to us any decisions, nor indeed intimation, even in a catechism, which was evidently prepared to draw strong lines of distinction between ourselves and the Romanists. They, who hold two Sacraments only, and they who hold seven, have a common, a serious, a sincere belief in the same Almighty God, as their Creator and Preserver—in the same ever blessed Son of God, as their Redeemer—in the same holy Spirit, as their Sanctifier—in the same future state of rewards and punishments, and in every Sacrament, which they think obligatory, they have the same common desire to discharge their duty and to secure their salvation.

It pains me to remember the reproachful lan-

guage, which Romanists and Protestants hold concerning each other upon their religious observances.

Reginaldus, Bishop Taylor says very truly, has this position—"A worshipper satisfies the Church by the external deed, nor does the Church require any thing else." Tolet says, the Bishop adds, that "the precept of hearing mass (i. e. the sacramental mass) is not to *intend the words*, but to be present at the sacrifice, though the words be not so much as heard, and they that think the contrary, think so without any probable reason."*

But whatsoever may have been the extravagance of particular doctors, the vigilance and perhaps hostility of Christian writers have not furnished them with any decree to this effect, sanctioned by the authority of General Councils, or Popes, or National Churches; and would it be consistent, my brethren, with common justice, or common sense, to make the Church of England answerable for all the irrational, all the unscriptural, all the fanatical, all the superstitious opinions, which may have been broached by zealots and dogmatists among the members of that Church?

Has it not been objected more than once to some English theologians, that they talk mystically when they maintain that there is an immediate, actual, special forgiveness of sins granted to the faithful communicants, and an immediate, actual infusion of Divine grace, such as is peculiar to this rite, and internally felt by the worshipper? But have these

* See Bp. Taylor's Dissuasive from Popery, p. 110.

members of our Church always been successful in their reasoning from Scripture, that such forgiveness has been promised, or in their appeal to experience, that such grace has been secretly but sensibly infused?

Among other benefits of Christ's Passion, the Church has certainly not specified any such communication of grace as some of our brethren would ascribe to the holy Communion; it gives no assurance that our sins are then and there pardoned, nor supplies any proof that our minds are then and there perceptibly more illuminated with grace than we find them to be in other seasons of inward meditation or external worship. Upon subjects so important to our spiritual improvement and future welfare, we must require much stronger evidence than the far-fetched refinements of any theologian, or the peremptory decision of any council. To me then, I confess, they who hold the opinion just now mentioned upon the peculiar grants of pardon, and the peculiar gifts of the spirit, fall into mysticism, for which the Church does not appear to me responsible. What is the language of the Church in our Communion Service? We desire God in his fatherly goodness to accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; we beseech him to grant, that we and all other believers may obtain the remission of our sins, not through the celebration of the Lord's Supper, but by the merits and death of Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood. But no mention is made of remission of sins then obtained. We farther beseech him, that all who are partakers of the

Holy Communion may be filled with his grace and heavenly benediction; but we are not told that the grace and the benediction are, at the moment, the appointed privileges of devout communicants, though in point of fact we by this, as well as every other exercise of piety, make more or less progress in Christian virtues. Most particularly, by giving thanks when we commemorate the death of Christ, our minds are more prepared to be thankful for all the other blessings of God, whether physical or not; we strengthen the general habit of gratitude; we feel it to be, not only a bounden, but a delightful duty.

Again, the supplications which the Church prescribes for grace and pardon have no alloy of mysticism, and they evidently imply that the increase or continuance of the one are future as well as present, and that the final attainment of the other is future only.

But the communication of Grace is a subject which deserves to be pursued, in order to check the extravagant notions of visionaries, and to show the real tenets of the English Church.

In the twenty-fifth article of the Church of England, it is said—"Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession; but rather, they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and by which he doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him."

I allow that by the Sacrament, God doth work

invisibly in us, and doth both quicken and confirm our faith in him; yet this effect is not peculiar to the Sacrament; the same effect, in a greater or less degree, accompanies all good works, which, as we read in the twelfth Article, "spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith," and which are performed with a direct consciousness of intention to obey God. It accompanies all our acts of private and public devotion, when the heart is sincerely and warmly moved — in common with those acts, the Sacrament is, so far, a sure witness and effectual sign of God's good will towards us, as to convince us at the moment, and after reflection, that we have been endeavouring to do what is pleasing in the sight of God, and that our endeavours will be approved by him.

In the Sacrament, and in all deeds of piety, God works within us invisibly, and we infer that he so works from the motives and goodly influence of the deeds themselves. I grant therefore the salutary efficacy of the Sacrament; but I am bounden to observe that such efficacy is not exclusively confined to such Sacrament, and that our warrant for believing such efficacy is to be found in experience and analogy, rather than in any specific and express testimony of the Scripture, that the Sacrament will bring with it such important advantage. They cannot be valued too highly — they cannot be desired too earnestly—they cannot be sought too frequently —they cannot be received too gratefully—they cannot be contemplated too seriously—they cannot be improved too diligently.

The accounts which I have given you of the operations of the spirit is widely different from the vague and extravagant position of some English teachers, and will show you that the Church is not answerable for their mistakes.

Let us then do unto other Churches the same justice, which we may reasonably require of them to do to our own. Never will the rash and wild positions of Reginald, Tolet, or other bigoted individuals induce me to give my assent to the unseemly and intemperate assertions of some Protestant Divines, that the "Romanists pray with their lips, and we with the heart — that we exclusively pray with the understanding, and they with the voice — that we pray, and that they only say prayers."

Every Pope, every Cardinal, every Prelate, every Priest, every Deacon, every layman in the Church of Rome, would repel the charge with just indignation; and sure I am, that an eye-witness of their behaviour at the sacramental table would acknowledge such an invidious comparison to be not only uncandid, but unfounded.

God forbid that by you or by myself the bending knee, the uplifted hands, the downcast eye, the low and tremulous voice, or the solemn and profound silence of the Romanist, should be imputed to ostentatious hypocrisy, to formal compliance with custom, to an understanding which sees not, and to a heart which feels not. No Romanist, I am fully persuaded, has so learned Christ. Why, then, should the Protestant and the Romanist mingle in-

vective with argument, and tarnish the general lustre of that cause which they respectively believe to be the common cause of truth, by an angry spirit, which certainly is not the spirit of their common religion. Rather let us suppose that, in their professions and in their actions, both are desirous to follow the revealed word of God, and let us admit that, where the intentions of both are equally upright, the mistakes of both must be equally venial.

I have censured those Protestants, who would represent the religion of the Romanist as belonging to his lips rather than to his mind; and with equal justice do I condemn the haughty and uncharitable language of those Romanists, who accuse the Church of England with coldness, and with scantiness in its regulations for the Lord's Supper. I shall not here insist upon many impassioned and sublime addresses to the Deity, which our Church has wisely adopted from the Roman Mass. I content myself with that part of it, in which we profess to eat the bread and drink of the cup in remembrance of Christ. Shall we then be told, that in the concise, simple, serious, affectionate language of Christ, in the command given to his disciples, there is no allurement to our curiosity, or taste, or gratitude—none to our curiosity, in contrasting the character and conduct of our Master with those, which the character and conduct, which the history of various nations ascribe to other founders of religion—none to our taste in discerning those pure and choice beauties of composition, which are perceived alike by the learned and the unlearned, because they flow from

nature rather than art—none, to our gratitude, when we remember not merely the words of Christ, but the occasion upon which he spoke them, when for our sakes he was upon the point of shedding his righteous blood? Shall we be told that the sincere and ardent desire to obey that command faithfully does not constitute a sacrifice well pleasing unto God? Far be such rashness and such uncharitableness from the bosom and the tongue of every human being, who pronounces the hallowed name of Jesus Christ.

I told you just now, that in describing the Sacrament, Christian writers had not only taken that name from the military oath of the Romans, but that they had likewise borrowed another term from that religious rite, which by the Greeks was supposed to excel all others in solemnity and importance. I mean the Eleusinian mysteries, instituted in honour of Ceres. As the expression has, unfortunately, I think, been admitted into our communion service, I am bounden to show you the origin of it.

The word *mystery* then is sometimes used for particular doctrines of the Gospel, as was the case also with sacramentum; sometimes it is used for the whole collective religion of Christ. In both of these uses it contains, not any proposition concerning the essence of the deity, but those moral dispensations, which are facts, and which, as such, can be fully comprehended by reason; but which are called mysteries, because they were unknown

before the coming of Christ. That Christ was sent by the Father is a fact—that he taught the most holy doctrine is a fact—that he worked miracles is a fact—that he died upon the cross is a fact—that he rose from the grave is a fact—that his religion would be preached to the Gentiles is a fact—and all these facts are so far mysterious, as that they could not be known to us without a revelation from God.

But farther, the word in the Greek language is sometimes used in an unfavourable sense, as when Josephus calls the life of Antipater, son of Herod, a mystery of wickedness: and Dionysius Halicarnassus says also of Theopompus, that he "developed the mysteries or secrets of falsely seeming virtue, and of concealed vice." The writer of the Apocalypse tells us that upon the forehead of the woman (chap. xvii. v. 5.) was written, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth."

My subject leads me rather to consider the favourable meaning of the word. Herodian calls the military oath of allegiance, which I before mentioned to you, the venerable mystery of the Roman Empire, meaning the secret power by which that empire was preserved. In reality, the word more generally bears a favourable sense, and therefore it was applied by Christian writers to the ceremony of Baptism, as we rarely apply it, and also to the ceremony of the Lord's Supper, as we apply it frequently. But when the Christian writers in the Greek language called these ceremonies μυστηρία,

τελετὰς, μυσταγωγία,* they evidently and almost confessedly transferred to their own use the pompous and imposing language of the heathens upon the greater or the lesser Eleusinian mysteries to which I adverted: and they supposed that the Lord's Supper, designated by these words, would appear more important and more venerable in the sight both of heathens and believers. Hence, too, the verb μύεσθαι, which meant, among the heathens, to celebrate the Eleusinian mysteries, signified among Christians to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Not only the ceremony itself was called μύησις, but the act of participation bore the same name; and another heathenish word, μύσταγώγεισθαι, meant, to be imbued with the doctrines of the Sacrament, and externally to partake of it. The Greek Church has adopted the words τελετὴ and μυστηρίων τελετὴ, and it pronounces them occult, holy, and venerable. How far Christians were successful in their endeavours to make the Sacrament an object of greater veneration among their heathenish neighbours is uncertain. The experiment among them was more likely to fail than to succeed, while to the mind of a Christian it might carry a more awful appear-

* The Sacrament is called also by the Greek writers the holy mystery—the mystery of our Lord—the great mystery of our salvation—the mystery of peace and unity among Christians. See Baronius—Exercitat. xvi. cap. 43. p. 388—409.

There seems among them a sort of enthusiastic predilection for the term; and when it had been established by custom, it could hardly have been opposed, without offence to orthodox believers.

ance. But, as the faithful claimed to themselves an exclusive knowledge of the secrets of Christianity, the heathens took advantage of their high-sounding language, and calumniously represented them as loving darkness rather than daylight in their noblest act of worship, and as shunning the eyes of mankind.

Now the Church of Rome has adopted the words mystery and mystical as applicable to various parts of their tenets and devotional services. If the bread be really turned into the body of Christ, and the wine into his blood, the change of it is miraculous, and the process of that change may be called mystical, or placed beyond the reach of our senses or our understanding. Again, if in the celebration of the Lord's Supper there be an actual sacrifice, it is miraculous, and we may call it mystical. The Romanists, therefore, are quite consistent in retaining the term; but why should we adopt it?

In the ceremony of baptism, you pray that God would sanctify the water to the mystical washing away of sin. In the Sacrament too, you thank God for permitting you to receive these holy mysteries, and for the assurances they give you, that you are made by them very members incorporate in the mystical body of his Son, which is the company of all faithful people. You should pause therefore before you charge superstition and impiety upon the Romanists, for admitting what they call mysteries in other circumstances. The Church has clearly interpreted what is meant by the members of the mystical body of Christ, by the words which are im-

mediately subjoined, "the company of all faithful people." But the Church does not tell you what is meant by the mystical washing away of sin, nor how water is sanctified so as to have the effect of washing it away. If, however, you retain the term in some sense or other, known or unknown to yourselves, why should you blame the Church of Rome for retaining the same word, and applying it to transubstantiation and to a sacrifice?

Again, I know not of any doctrine, general or particular, any effect, visible or invisible, which corresponds to the word mystery in the Lord's Supper. According to the principles of the Church then, there is not any perceivable necessity for the word; for surely the ceremonies which are prescribed, and the reasons which are assigned for them, and the supplications which are joined with them, are quite sufficient to impress the communicant with reverence, when he eats the sacramental bread and drinks the sacramental cup in remembrance of his Saviour. They who live in our own times, and who speak in our own language, would not feel any increase of that reverence, if they were told that a Christian rite is designated by a term which originally denoted a code of secret doctrines, and a series of secret observances, among the worshippers at Eleusis. I never could catch the slightest glimpse of any use in the term, and I am sure that some harm arises from it. It fills the minds of unlearned hearers with dark and superstitious notions of some unexplained circumstances, or, I should rather say, of inexplicable efficacy, in the Lord's Supper. For

this very weighty reason, I have often wished that the word mystery were entirely removed from our language, and that instead of it should be substituted the words *sacred rite*. Apparently, and really, the Lord's Supper is such a rite; and, as such, it is not only clear to the understandings of communicants, but awakens their attention, exercises their faith, and animates their piety.

Having thus explained to you the origin and the import of the two words, Sacrament, and Mystery, I shall now proceed to recommend to your consideration the meaning of another word which you often hear—it is *Eucharist*. Though in the New Testament we do not meet with the word, it is of great antiquity. It is used by the early Christian Fathers, and it is employed by them sometimes in a general, but far more frequently in a specific sense. Generally it denotes thanksgiving, according to its etymology. "The Eucharist," says Chrysostom, (Homily 134,) "is so called when any one gives thanks to God for the benefits which he has received." "Giving thanks," says he, (Homily 18,) "we do so, not only in words, but in deeds also, and in Eucharists, or true expressions of gratitude." "These tremendous and salutary mysteries," he elsewhere says, "which we celebrate in every congregation, are called mysteries because they are the remembrance of many benefits, and show the very head of Divine Providence, and prepare us, that in all things we may give thanks."

"Eucharist," says Clemens Alexandrinus, (Strom 5,) "is performed, not only on account of the soul

and spiritual good things, but for the body also and bodily good things."

But in a very eminent sense it long ago began to be applied, and has since continued to be applied, to the Lord's Supper."

"This food," says Justin, (Apology, ii.) i. e. the Lord's Supper, "is called by us Eucharist." "The bread and wine of the Eucharist," says Cyril. "We have a symbol," says Origen, "of Eucharist, or thanks to God, called the bread of the Eucharist." The Nicene Council uses the same word in the same signification. Cyprian, a Latin writer, so employs it. The learned Michael Dufresne, in his Dissertation on Ancient Ceremonies of Sacraments, tells us, "This name of Eucharist was particularly given to the Lord's Supper, from the institution and the example of our Saviour; for the Evangelists bear witness that, in the very act of institution, our Saviour gave thanks to the Father. From this circumstance," he adds, "the Sacrament obtained the name of Eucharist, which, though it be not extant in Scripture, is employed by the very old Syriac paraphrast, by Ignatius in his Epistle to the Inhabitants of Smyrna, by Justin, by Irenæus, and other ancient writers of the Church, to say nothing of later writers."

Speaking, moreover, of the feast of the Paschal Lamb, which among the Jews was concluded with a cup, Dufresne calls it the cup of praise, and contrasts it with the cup of thanksgiving in the Lord's Supper.

In a former discourse, I told you the great satis-

faction which I had, that, among all the diversities of speculative tenets and external ceremonies among Christians on the subject of the Lord's Supper, there was one circumstance upon which all of them were alike agreed. I mean, that it is commemorative. They are farther agreed, that the commemoration was enjoined by Christ. Finally, they are agreed that this commemoration is in part to be performed by thanksgiving; and for the expression of such thanksgiving they have adopted the word Eucharist. Here then we have an intelligible and pertinent term, completely unmixed with any mystical notions, or any polemical subtleties. I stated to you, that among the Greek Fathers Eucharist has a wide signification, as well as a more restrained one; but in later times all churches and all sects confine the word to the expression of our gratitude for the mercy of God in sending his only begotten Son to die for us, and for the meritorious and transcendental merit of Christ in suffering death for our sakes.

Happily for us, the doctrines and practices of our Church are not encumbered with any ceremony like that which was called Purgation by the Eucharist. This phrase is used in the Council of Worms, the Triburian Council, and many controversial and historical writers in the Church of Rome.

As to the thing itself, we are to understand that when a priest was accused of any crime he was allowed to clear himself by the Eucharist; and the privilege arose from the reverence in which the

Eucharist was holden. It was thought that the hands, which had administered the cup and blood of our Lord should not be polluted by the usual form of taking an oath, when the person who took it was required to hold or touch the Bible.

As Protestants, we neither observe such a custom, nor give credit to such an opinion. But mark, I beseech you, the unadorned language and the solid wisdom of those excellent men, by whom the Church of England was founded. They directed you, not only to take the bread which is a symbol of Christ's body, but to feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving. They directed you not only to drink the wine, which is the symbol of Christ's blood, but to be thankful.

Here then you can have no difficulties upon the nature of your duty, as it is preserved in our sacramental service. Here, you may avail yourselves of the solemn, but affectionate exhortation, which is given you to take the Lord's Sacrament to your comfort. Here you have no alloy to that comfort in taking it by any declaration or even suggestion, that may darken your judgment with doubts, or oppress your hearts with dismay. Here you, according to the words of the Psalmist, may taste and see that the Lord is good. Here you may experimentally know how pleasant and joyful a thing it is for Christians to be thankful unto their Father, who is in Heaven, and to bless the holy name of their dying Redeemer.

The conformity between my own judgement and feelings with those of Archbishop Tillotson, is so

entire, that I, with the greatest delight shall conclude this Sermon in his unadorned but most pathetic language.

"Men," says he, "are used religiously to observe the charge of a dying friend, but this is the charge of our best friend, our Sovereign and our Saviour, the great lover of souls. Can we deny any thing he asks of us, when he was preparing to undergo the most grievous pains and sufferings for our sakes? Can we deny him this thing so little grievous and burthensome in itself, so infinitely beneficial to us? Had such a friend then, in such circumstances, bid us do some great thing, would we not have done it? How much more then, when he hath only said, "Do this in remembrance of me! When he hath only recommended to us one of the most natural and delightful actions, as a fit memorial of his goodness to us in delivering himself up to the worst of temporal deaths, that it might co-operate with other means in delivering us from the bitter pains of eternal death."*

* Sermon xxv. vol. ii. p. 133.

# SERMON XXVIII.

LUKE xxii. 19 & 20.

*And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

*Likewise also the cup after Supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

AFTER the historical, critical, and practical remarks which I made in my last discourse upon the three words *Sacrament*, *Mystery*, and *Eucharist*, I shall endeavour to set right a numerous, but misguided class of Christians upon the real meaning of St. Paul's words in the text, and upon the qualifications necessary for a pious remembrance of their Saviour at the Lord's Supper.

In the way of preliminary remark I may properly state to you, that the Church of Rome is consistent in maintaining the necessity of self-examination; for the teachers in that Church require confession followed by absolution, before they permit their adherents to communicate. But the Church of England has ordained no previous ceremony; it stops short with exhortation—very earnest indeed and very solemn, but pushing the duty to a degree of strictness, which is not directly inculcated by St. Paul's

language, as I shall presently expound it to you, nor indirectly recommended in any other part of the New Testament.

In the process of examination, as it is sometimes conducted in the Church of Rome, I have now and then met with grounds for weighty objection. If questions be proposed to sinful men in general terms, the impression is likely to be indistinct and transient; but if detail be employed, it may fatigue our minds from number, or distract them by diversity, or disgust them by minuteness. This remark I have occasionally made upon reading lists of sins in their various modifications, as subjects proposed by Romish confessors. In some instances they are frivolous enough to provoke derision from a man of sense; in others they let loose the imaginations of young men upon numberless and nameless impurities which relate to the indulgence of their unruly appetites; and subjects of this kind, if not treated with great wariness and delicacy, are too likely to produce levity rather than seriousness; in others, they violate that amiable and sacred modesty which adorns the female sex, and they make room for the curiosity or the libidinousness of a confessor to pry into circumstances, the knowledge of which ought to be confined to the bosoms of individuals and to their Maker. The Church of England has however shown such prudence, such decorum, and such tenderness, as to avert the inconveniences and improprieties to which I just now alluded. It neither insists upon the necessity, nor withholds the benefits of that private confession, which occasionally forms

a part of examination. It does not authoritatively prescribe such rules as would counteract the exercise of sound discretion in a minister, who is anxious to adapt his inquiries to the peculiar and diversified circumstances of those who apply to him for advice or consolation. Doubtless, the founders of our Church perceived that some kind of examination, though not absolutely necessary, might be highly proper for persons who intend to partake of the Lord's Supper; and foreseeing that such persons might be afraid to rely entirely upon their own private reflections, they close one of their public exhortations in these judicious and serious terms.

"And because it is requisite that no man should come to the holy communion but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience; therefore, if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel; let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister of God's Word, and open his grief, that by the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness."

In our own times few, even of the most pious worshippers are accustomed to consult with their minister before they communicate; and yet they are not guilty of negligence or presumption when they commemorate the death of their Redeemer. He indeed that avails himself of the provision made

for his use by our Church is entitled to commendation, and yet he that is content to commune with his own heart does not deserve blame.

I shall now enter more directly on the subjects proposed for our consideration. Many well-meaning persons are deterred from coming to the sacramental-table, by an opinion that a previous examination of themselves, as to every infirmity and every fault in every part of their lives—youth, manhood, and age, is indispensably necessary to make their participation in the Sacrament acceptable in the sight of God; and they are often led to believe, that without such examination they are unworthy communicants; that they are guilty, as we read in our translation, of the body and blood of Christ; that, according to the language of our Common Prayer-book, they eat and drink their own damnation, not considering the Lord's body; that they kindle God's wrath against them, and provoke him to plague us with divers diseases and sundry kinds of death. These are evils most tremendous to our imagination, and it well becomes me to show how far you, in reality, are or are not in danger of incurring them.

By the general, the useful, but I confess, unauthorised practice of judicious clergymen in our own age, *damnation* is changed into the less alarming word, *condemnation;* and there is no doubt but that the act of taking the Sacrament without a reverential and grateful remembrance of our Lord's meritorious sufferings upon the cross, would be a deed for which every communicant would sincerely

and seriously blame himself, and for which, unless he repented of it, he would expect to incur the disapprobation of Almighty God. The change which I just now mentioned depends, as you will observe, upon the knowledge or ignorance, the firmness or timidity, the attentiveness or the carelessness, and the mild or the rigorous opinions of individual ministers; and thus the great bulk of communicants must be perplexed, whether they are to follow the priest who retains, or the priest who alters, the printed Word.

In vindication of this change it may be stated, and even urged, that the framers of our Articles, who in the twenty-fifth had said that "they who receive the Lord's Supper unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation," resume the subject in the twenty-ninth, and are content to tell us that "the wicked, who are devoid of a lively faith, do rather eat and drink their own condemnation." But from the substitution of the milder term we may, without any gross improbability, entertain some doubt, whether to the stronger term which precedes, they affixed the entire and unqualified sense of eternal damnation. Be this as it may, the generality of communicants are not aware of the difference in the language of the articles; and therefore, when they read the sacramental-service, they understand the word damnation according to its very strictest and the most terrific import.

It were however very much to be wished, that in this important part of the Prayer-book a few other alterations were to be made by the authority of the

Church. I will therefore point out to you certain particulars on the phraseology of the Prayer-book; and then I will lay before you the interpretation given by pious and learned prelates of the Scriptural passage, which the persons employed in drawing up the communion-service had more immediately in view, and misunderstood. In point of fact, then, scarcely any communicant comes to the sacramental-table without considering the Lord's body; and while he is in the sanctuary he is reminded of it before he takes the consecrated bread—reminded when he takes it—reminded after he has taken it. Can such a man be said, negligently or presumptuously to be guilty of the body and blood of Christ, i. e. to be guilty of an affront to the body and blood of Christ (for that is the meaning of the expression), if his understanding and his moral affections go along with the minister when he prays, that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given, and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for the communicant himself, may preserve his body and soul unto everlasting life—where he is reminded to take and eat the bread and to drink of the cup in remembrance that Christ died for him—and where he is exhorted to feed on Christ in his heart by faith in thanksgiving? In point of fact, have we seen or heard of any instance, in which the thoughtlessness and rashness, into which a communicant may now and then have fallen, has provoked God to plague him with divers diseases and sundry kinds of death? In the time of St. Paul, indeed, we have historical evidence that some of the Corinthian

converts did eat and drink unworthily—that they did bring with them a great abundance of provisions, no part of which they gave to their poorer and hungry brethren—that they did eat and drink to a most criminal excess—and that on some occasions disease and death were the consequences, and I add, the punishments of intemperance aggravated by impiety. I do not go the same length with some theologians, who seriously conjecture, but without venturing to affirm positively, that, upon the first promulgation of the Gospel, the Apostles were invested with discretionary power of inflicting judgments upon all notorious offenders. The question therefore before us on the *present* occasion is, whether the weaknesses and the sicknesses and deaths of the unworthy communicants were preceded by the exercise of any such power in St. Paul. I hold, that the contrary appears. St. Paul evidently speaks of the lot of such Corinthians as had defiled the religious rite of the Lord's Supper by their excesses in eating and drinking; but neither here nor elsewhere does he drop the slightest intimation that these judgments were the consequence of any supernatural authority entrusted to himself; and yet, surely if it had been so exercised, he would have noticed the fact, and thus given additional weight to his reproofs and to his warnings. On the other hand, we can have no difficulty in imaging that the Corinthians had exposed themselves to effects similar in kind, and perhaps more than equal in degree, to those which are experienced by other men, who fall into nearly similar and nearly equal

offences against the laws of God; and it well became St. Paul to advert to such alarming occurrences, fresh as they must have been in the memory of the Corinthians themselves, as well as of the Apostles. But the turpitude and the perils of these evil practices would be sufficiently marked—the great interests of virtue would be sufficiently secured—the scandalous abuses of the Lord's Supper would be sufficiently condemned, and the moral government of the world would be sufficiently vindicated, upon the supposition that punishment was visibly inflicted upon the Corinthians, in order that the example of suffering in the transgressors might operate as a powerful antidote to the contagious example of their transgressions.

It may be proper for me to mention to you the difference of practice in the times of the Apostles and our own. The first Christians met at the Lord's Supper almost every day, though it appears from ecclesiastical history, that the daily celebration had ceased at Milan in the time of St. Ambrose, at Rome in the time of St. Jerome, and through Africa in the time of St. Austin. Our present concern is with the Corinthian converts. They assembled very frequently and without any special summons to a meal; and while they were partaking of it, they were accustomed to receive the Lord's Supper. The Sacrament, you see, was intermingled with their meals; and they were too often tempted by the luxuries of that meal to disregard the restraints, which the remembrance of Christ's death ought to have put upon their desire of eating and drinking; but

in no Christian countries are believers now exposed to the same danger from the same cause. We meet together, not as chance may lead, on this or that day, but at stated and solemn periods. We assemble not at private houses, as did the primitive Christians, but in places of public worship. We never intermix the food and the drink of a meal with the bread and wine which we receive at the communion-table. Our reverence would be lessened by such a mixture; and with us, as with the Corinthians, there might be now and then some degree of danger that inconsiderate persons would be guilty of the excess imputed to the Corinthians, and thus receive the body and blood of Christ, as they received it, unworthily.

The history of the Church in subsequent ages does not record, nor even intimate, any example of such intemperance as St. Paul observed in his converts. Possible however it is, that such cases might occur, though very rarely; and in order to lessen the chance of their recurrence, as well as to avert the misrepresentations of spies and scoffers, the ceremony of mixing water with the wine was originally introduced; and was afterwards by the mere force of custom, retained when the danger had passed by. And here it may not be amiss to inform you, that in later times, when the liturgy of our own Church was first drawn up, a rubric ordering water to be mixed with wine was inserted, and was afterwards omitted in consequence of a subsequent review during the reign of Queen Eli-

zabeth. We know from ecclesiastical history the groundless and mischievous calumnies, which were propagated against the primitive Christians upon their celebration of the Lord's Supper; and it well became their prudence, not less than their piety, to protect themselves from every plausible imputation of levity and inebriety, when they met together at the Holy Communion.

Of those calumnies I shall produce one proof from Minutius Felix. The words of Minutius Felix p. 95, are, "certè occultis ac nocturnis sacris apposita suspicio."

Be this as it may, the faults of communicants in our own times, if there be any, do not resemble the faults of the Corinthians.

Destitute of any fixed place for religious worship, and alarmed by the suspicions and the clamours of contemptuous Heathens and malicious Jews, the Corinthians were compelled to assemble in private houses, and in the night season; but we celebrate the Lord's Supper in open day, where the slightest impropriety would be seen and disapproved. The rich Corinthians sat apart from their poorer brethren; but we kneel down together, without any studied and offensive distinction of rank, in the same posture, and within the same sanctuary. The Corinthians bestowed no portion of their viands to relieve the hunger of their brethren; we make an offering for their benefit. The Corinthians, when they went to the Lord's Supper, brought with them the materials of a luxurious feast; the bread which

we eat and are desirous of eating, is but a morsel; the wine which we drink, and are desirous of drinking, is scarcely sufficient to allay the slightest degree of thirst.

Now, whatsoever differences may exist upon the nature and end of the Sacrament in the doctrines of Christian communities, and whatsoever variety there may be in their discipline, as to their ceremonious observances in celebrating it, there does not exist one human being who would dare in thought, or deed, to be a glutton or a drunkard when he receives the Lord's Supper. Let me now call your attention to the words of St. Paul. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, a people of whom you will do well to observe, that they were educated, not as you are, in the early, the uninterrupted, the unfeigned belief of Christianity, but amidst the errors and corruptions of Heathenism; a people so notoriously vicious, that to "act the Corinthian," means in the Greek language to be voluptuous and dissolute in the extreme; a people who, from the untoward influence of their former customs, were, even after their conversion, more liable than you are to commit improprieties and irregularities when they were assembled at the table of the Lord. Perceiving the dangers to which the Corinthians were exposed, St. Paul was fully justified in warning his followers thus earnestly and thus solemnly—"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink of this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty

of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

My brethren, it is to be lamented, as I before said, that the word *damnation*, which our translators have used in the text, should continue to be retained; and that our congregations should not hear the less terrific, and more correct word, *judgment*, which in the last version of the Scriptures was placed in the margin of our New Testament; and this is not the only instance in which I have told you, that the marginal reading employed by the good sense and learning of English ecclesiastics is preferable to the reading of the text. Here I must remark to you, that *judgment* is explained by Archbishop Newcome and by Bishop Pearce—not as punishment in the world to come, but as judgment in this world, and judgment actually and especially inflicted upon the Corinthians. The words of Archbishop Newcome are "temporal judgment;" the words of Bishop Pearce are "the Greek word (κρίμα) here signifies temporal punishment; that is to say, weakness, sickness, and death, as appears from verse the 30th, for this reason, that is, by eating and drinking unworthily, which from the context and the history implies want of reverence, and want, even of sobriety, many among you are weak and infirm, and several are dead." The celebrated Bishop Warburton agrees with the three prelates just now mentioned, in supposing that St. Paul had particularly

in view the events of his own time, and the misconduct of his own converts. "The Corinthians," says he, "had been guilty of celebrating the Lord's Supper in a very indecent manner, by confounding it with their ordinary repasts, or with convivial doings of their own invention, where charity and sobriety were too frequently violated." The Bishop, you must remember, does not say that the want of previous self-examination constituted the guilt of the Corinthians, but he does say explicitly, and he says only, that their fault was the indiscriminate celebration of the Lord's Supper.

St. Paul certainly knew what really was the case with some of his converts. But who, in our own times, will venture to say, that he has ever seen, or ever heard, of any communicant who has brought punishment upon himself by profaneness and drunkenness at the Lord's Supper? And now, my brethren, let me entreat you to attend to me when I more largely clear up the real import of the word, which is misunderstood by many unlearned hearers, and enforced by many half-learned teachers, as imposing the necessity of a plenary and rigorous examination before we communicate.

Bishop Pearce says, "it is material to observe here, that δοκιμάζειν does not seem to relate to any examination of what sins they had been formerly guilty of (such as is usually and commendably made before we receive the Lord's Supper), but the phrase δοκιμαζέτω ἑαυτὸν signifies let him *distinguish himself* from a guest at a common meal; let him consider that he is not at his own, but at Christ's table:

and this difference consists in receiving the Eucharist with reverence, in considering the end of its institution, viz. a remembrance of Christ's death, and with showing a love and affection for our brethren." Tillotson has proved this at large in his Sermon on frequent Communion.

Bishop Pearce, as a commentator on the Epistle to the Corinthians, is properly content with referring his readers to Tillotson's Discourse. But, it behoves me, as a preacher, to lay before you the very words of Tillotson. They are these:

"Some of the Corinthians at the participation of the Sacrament behaved themselves with as little reverence as if they been at a common supper or feast; and this he calls 'not discerning the Lord's body,' making no difference in their behaviour between the Sacrament and a common meal. This irreverent and contemptuous carriage of theirs he calls eating and drinking unworthily, for which he pronounces them guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, which were represented and commemorated in the eating of that bread and the drinking of that cup. He tells them, that by so doing, they incurred the judgment of God, which he calls 'eating and drinking their own judment.' For that the word κρίσις, which our translators render *damnation*, does not here signify eternal condemnation, but a temporal judgment and chastisement, in order to the prevention of eternal condemnation, is evident from what follows, — 'he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself;' and then he says, 'for this cause many are weak and sickly among

you, and many sleep:' that is, for this irreverence of theirs God had sent among them several diseases, of which many had died." *

Such, you will remember, is the language of a venerable Prelate, who was distinguished by variety of knowledge in the works of writers sacred and profane, by soundness of judgment, by calmness of temper, by meekness of spirit, by patience under unmerited calumnies, by humility in an exalted station, by sincerity and steadiness of principle, and by the most exemplary holiness of life. He was a most strenuous and undaunted champion in the support of Protestantism. He defended his opinions with equal ability and ardour against contemporary Protestants who traduced him as a latitudinarian, and contemporary Romanists who reviled him as a heretic. He encouraged and he practised toleration towards all religious sects, at a time when the principles of religious freedom were imperfectly understood and ungraciously received. His judicious, and, with an exception to the memorable John Hales of Eton, I must add, his *original* mode of teaching—learned, as it was, without pedantry, popular without ostentation, temperate without coldness, and earnest without extravagance—gradually put a stop to the fanatical rant which had pervaded this country; and it presents to us a model of rational faith, perspicuous reasoning, and useful instruction, which has been approved and followed by the most eminent Divines of the English Church,

* Vide Serm. xxv. p. 145. vol. ii.

from the days of Tillotson to the close of the last century.

You will excuse this short digression, as flowing from my head and my heart, and as intended for a tribute of justice to the memory of one of the brightest luminaries that ever adorned our venerable Church.

But farther, as the notions suggested by the word *discerning* is familiar to your minds, and will mislead you in your judgment, upon the Scripture itself, as relating to the Lord's Supper, I must dwell somewhat longer upon the subject.

St. Paul's word, in chapter xi. verse 28, is equivalent to another word, which occurs both in ver. 31 of the same chapter, and in chap. iv. ver. 7, of the same Epistle. *Discern*, in ver. 29 of chap. xi. is to me a feeble and obscure expression; and I am sure that, to most hearers, it suggests no distinct notions of St. Paul's meaning. In chap. iv. our translation says, "Who *maketh thee to differ*," and the translators would have been more right if they had said, "Who *distinguisheth* thee from another," But they are altogether wrong, when in ver. 28 of chap. xi. they say, "let a man examine himself;" and also, when in ver. 31 they say, "if we would judge ourselves." In these two passages, *distinguish* is a fitter word than *examine* in one, and *judge* in the other. In both the passages of chap. xi. *examine* is wrong, and *distinguish* would be right, and in both this word is applied to persons who, as I must again and again repeat to you, are to distinguish

themselves as persons who partake of the Lord's Supper, from persons who partake of a common meal.

In all these criticisms I have been assisted by Bishop Pearce, and therefore I must not be accused of rashness. In chap. iv. he substitutes, as I would, *distinguish* for *maketh to differ*. In the 28th verse of chap. xi. he says, "let a man *distinguish* himself," instead of *examine*. In verse 31 he says, "if we would *examine* ourselves," not *judge* ourselves.

Now let us turn to Archbishop Newcome. His translation is this: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not distinguishing the Lord's body."

I have already stated to you, that these illustrious Prelates understand by *judgment*, temporal punishment, and I have further told you, that such judgment did befal some licentious and profane contemporaries of St. Paul, though we have no example of similar punishment among later Christians of any denomination; and then, as to the other word, *distinguish*, I must inform you, that it is the very term, which Archbishop Newcome has deliberately selected for the text of his admirable translation; and that in his note we find not only the same meaning, but nearly the same language, which I just now quoted. "Not distinguishing," says Archbishop Newcome, "the sign or symbol, or representation of the Lord's body from an ordinary meal."

I beseech you then to remember, that three eminently learned and pious Prelates of the English Church unite in excluding the word *examine*, from

which so many and frightful conclusions have been drawn; and that they farther unite in adopting the word *distinguish*, and in explaining it as the act of distinguishing from an ordinary meal that bread of which we eat, and that cup of which we drink, when we celebrate the Lord's Supper in obedience to his command; and celebrated, as you must take notice, in remembrance of his Cross and Passion. Now, is any communicant in our own or in any other house of worship so grossly ignorant, so brutishly irreverent, as not to make a difference, a wide and important difference, between the sacramental bread and wine and an ordinary meal? Do any of you talk, or even think, of the cares or the pleasures of the world when you kneel at the Lord's table, as you talk and as you think of them when you are at your daily meals, or your occasional and harmless feasts? Does any man reeking from the brothel or the tavern presume to approach the Lord's Supper, and to share with his fellow-Christians in the banquet of that most heavenly food? Some of you may be more serious than others, and the best of you may be more devout at one time than at another; but, I am confident that no man in this or any other sanctuary is chargeable with intemperance, or with levity, or with intentional impiety. The very scruples and the very fears, which prevent many from coming to the Sacrament, are proofs that, if you did come, you would not receive it unworthily, as it was too often received by the Corinthians, whom St. Paul exhorts with so much holy ardour, and censures with so much just severity.

The words of St. Paul then are to be thus understood: "Distinguish yourselves, as partakers of the Lord's Supper, not of a common meal, so that ye may not be judged of the Lord." In the preceding verses St. Paul had clearly stated in what those judgments of the Lord consisted — they were, sickness or death. But, in no other parts of Scripture, do we read of similar judgments inflicted upon unworthy partakers; and the cases of the Corinthians, as I have endeavoured to prove at large, was peculiar to them from local and temporary circumstances.

In the course of a long and not inactive life, as a teacher of religion, I, in various parts of the kingdom, have administered the Sacrament to various classes of communicants; I have holden out the cup to the well-educated and to the illiterate — to the orthodox, as they are called, and to the heterodox — to the rich and to the poor—to the young, the middle-aged, and the old; and, in all probability, I have not been an inattentive observer of what was passing in the sanctuary. But I have not been mortified and afflicted by the sight of any instance in which the communicants seemed to be made unworthy, by the pride of learning, by the dulness of ignorance, by the zeal of orthodoxy, by the captiousness of heterodoxy, by the haughtiness of wealth, by the sluggishness of poverty, by the levity of youth, by the hardihood of manhood, or by the coldness and debility of old age. Right intention was a property common to all of them; and in all of them decorum was attended by a greater or less

degree of seriousness. Upon the whole, then, I shall acquit nearly all communicants of receiving the bread and drinking the wine unworthily, even though they may have come to it without the previous discipline of rigid self-examination. But here, my brethren, I must beg of you not to mistake my meaning upon the general, and, I add, the great usefulness of examining our own hearts and reviewing our own actions. This is a duty which you cannot perform too frequently or too strictly. You may perform it, and sometimes you ought to perform it, when you go forth to your daily labours—you may perform it, and ought to perform it, when you lie down upon your pillow, and implore the protection of God from the perils of the night, and his forgiveness for your various transgressions in the day that is past—you may perform it, and you ought to perform it, when, retiring from the bustle of business or the gaieties of amusement, you have an opportunity in your chambers to commune with your own hearts, and to reflect, as the Golden Verses ascribed to Pythagoras recommend, upon every omission, and every commission, at the close of every day—you may perform it, and you ought to perform it, when you read the Holy Scriptures, upon the evening of the Sabbath-day — you may perform it, and you ought to perform it, when, in your private devotions, you bow your knees in the name of Jesus Christ—you may perform it, to more or less extent, when, upon the first day, or any day of the week, you enter the sanctuary, to join in the public worship of God. The perform-

ance of it upon all occasions will keep down pride —it will excite vigilance, as well as deepen humility—it will produce salutary contrition for the past, it will facilitate and invigorate your resolutions for amendment in the future. It never can be unseasonable. It must always be at once becoming and useful—it will be particularly becoming and useful when you intend to celebrate the Lord's Supper. But as an examination of your whole life, it is not a duty peculiarly and indispensibly requisite to make you worthy communicants; and the omission of it, as we most of us experimentally know, still leaves room for the exercise of many Christian virtues, when, with good intention, we meet our brethren, and join with them in acknowledging the merits of our dying Saviour. In reality, all the great purposes of reflection, as preparatory to amendment, would be answered without an examination so very severe and so very minute as that which many good Christians think themselves bound to employ before they communicate. Any one instance of notorious and heinous sin—any overt act of base and deliberate seduction, of foul incest, of wilful and corrupt perjury, of fraud, of rapine, or of fell revenge—any inveterate habit of sinning against continence, against sobriety, against truth, against justice, and against charity, will quickly present itself to the mind at the very time of celebration; and surely, when it is so presented, the most inconsiderate and the most obdurate cannot be wholly indifferent to his danger, nor wholely regardless of the warnings

to repent, which such painful recollections at such a serious season can scarcely fail to excite.

Let me, my brethren, here propose to you some plain and important questions, which you must be able to answer. After reverently and gratefully receiving the Lord's Supper, did you ever stand self-condemned, because you had not examined yourselves to the utmost possible extent? Do you believe, that upon your death-bed you will stand acquitted to yourselves, because, year after year, you made the want of a most severe self-examination a plea for absenting yourselves from the Communion? Can you lay your hands upon your hearts and say, that you had not some other reason, and to deal plainly with you, I mean some reason which you are ashamed to allege openly—some reason which you are ashamed to explore within yourselves steadily — some reason, which no sagacious man could hear without a smile of subdued contempt—some reason, which no virtuous man could repeat without disapprobation and a sigh of pity; and though you rely upon it to-day or to-morrow, are you sure that you can have the same reliance when you stand upon the brink of eternity? It may be granted, or rather it may be affirmed, of every human being, that, after receiving the Holy Communion, he has more or less been betrayed by human infirmity into the repetition of some offence or other, which he in the sanctuary had more or less resolved to reform.

It is indeed with the Sacrament, as it is with every other act of devotion, that the salutary effects of it must be gradual.—Be it so. But does not

every remembrance of your sins—does not every confession of them—does not every supplication for the forgiveness of them—does not every wish to avoid them, with the assistance of Heaven, tend to put you upon your guard, when you might otherwise have slumbered—tend to invigorate your efforts, where they might otherwise have been faint—tend to deepen your dread of ultimate punishment—tend to cherish and to perpetuate the love of all those virtues, which are so luminously described and solemnly enforced in the words which all of you hear or all of you utter, when you are communicants in this House of God? And if this be the case, beware how you excuse yourselves from coming to the Lord's Supper, because, forsooth, you are not, or rather because you have not endeavoured to be, sufficiently ready. Away then, I would exhort you, with excuses, which are sometimes foolish, often false, and always unworthy of your name as Christians, and always dangerous to your salvation as rational and moral beings, unalterably destined to receive the recompence of your actions in a world to come.

I have already set before you the words of Bishop Pearce, when he speaks of self-examination, as is usually and commendably made before we receive the Lord's Supper. I certainly should rejoice if the examination were usual, I should allow and maintain with the Bishop, that it is highly commendable. But he would agree with me, that examination, as extending to every part of our conduct in every part of our lives is not absolutely necessary, upon every

act of communion; and he would further allow, that self-examination, though sometimes performed in a less degree, would not subject us to the dreadful imputation of offering an affront to the body and blood of Christ. There is indeed one, and there is but one sense of the word, in which I should contend for examination, as, not merely salutary, but obligatory upon communicants. I will deliver my opinion in the words of a celebrated lexicographer: "Let him examine himself, not as to what he has done or left undone in time past, but as to his present intention in that which he is about to do as a communicant at the Lord's Supper."* If we explore, as he says, and examine ourselves as to the manner in which, and the purpose for which, we celebrate the Lord's Supper, such an examination I would seriously advise—such examination you would easily make; and having made it, you will derive from it the most beneficial effects.

Suppose that in the ordinary course of life, any of you have been more or less addicted to intemperance, to lewdness, to lying, to profaneness, to injustice, to cruelty, and to that vice—that odious vice, which so often besets us, so secretly beguiles us, so fatally depraves us, I mean the vice of envy; my brethren, conscience in some degree will be awakened when we take in our hands the sacramental cup. At the moment, we shall remember more distinctly and we shall feel more intensely any

* Δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν quidlibet examinet et exploret se, quo consilio et animo ad cœnam sacram accedat.—See Schleus. in voce.

of those sins, than we, in all probability, remembered and felt them the day before. We shall be conscious of some wish at least, that they had never been committed. We shall involuntarily and irresistibly, begin to form some resolution not to commit them again. Surely, I may appeal to the experience of all who hear me, for the accuracy of this statement; and therefore I would exhort all of you to distinguish the Lord's Supper from a common meal, that your minds may be disposed towards the importance of amendment, towards the hope of mercy—towards such unfeigned and fervent supplication, that your amendment may be progressive and preparatory for the final completion of your hope to obtain such mercy.

To conclude—The substance of the lesson, which I am now endeavouring to inculcate, will be found in the reasonable principles, in the perspicuous statements, in the hallowed phraseology of the sacramental service itself. Hear then the excellent words of our Church:

"Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling on your knees."

These conditions are clear to every one of you and practicable by every one of you. He that sincerely and devoutly endeavours to comply with

those conditions will not receive the Sacrament unworthily, though he should not have examined himself with the rigour which has been indiscriminately recommended by inconsiderate teachers, and which, by too many hearers, has been thought a qualification so very necessary, that the want of it would make your faith in Christ, your thankfulness to God, and your charity to mankind at the Lord's table wholly unavailing; or as many of you may have imagined, as deeply dangerous to your final salvation. On the contrary, with the qualifications just now recommended, you may look for all the benefits of Christ's passion. You will find yourselves confirmed and strengthened in all goodness; you may hope to be pardoned from all your sins. Knowing that you have been lovingly called and bidden by God himself, and that it is your duty to receive the communion in remembrance of Christ's death as he has himself commanded, you may kneel at the altar, and retire to your homes with the well-founded expectation that this act by which you thankfully acknowledge the exceeding great love of your Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ, thus dying for you, will be most efficacious in giving to your souls the most valuable comforts here, and in bringing you hereafter to everlasting life.

# SERMON XXIX.

I CAME NOT TO SEND PEACE, BUT A SWORD.

MATTHEW x. 34.

*Think not I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

Do these words breathe the spirit of Mahomet, or of Christ? Were they uttered by a cunning and audacious impostor, who, in order to gratify his ambition, and to satiate his cruelty, trampled upon every law of justice? Or shall we ascribe them, in the most invidious sense, to a teacher who firmly rejected every proffered honour, and whose distinguishing characteristic was, that he went about doing good?

In the solution of this seeming difficulty, I shall first explain at large what probably is not, and what really is, the import of the words themselves; secondly, I shall obviate some speculative objections, which may arise in the minds of those by whom my interpretation is admitted; thirdly, I shall consider how far the declaration of Christ has been accomplished, in the tumultuous divisions of the

Christian world; and, lastly, I shall examine into the more secret and efficacious causes of those divisions. But my present discourse will be confined to the two first heads proposed for our consideration.

Now if our blessed Lord could for a moment be supposed, by any virtuous man, to have spoken the words of my text in the very offensive signification which some profligate persons have asssigned to them, it must at the same time be confessed that he, in the whole course of his life, acted, and professed to act, in direct contradiction to them. Ought we not then to hesitate, at least, before we ascribe deliberate cruelty to a teacher, whose readiness to instruct the ignorant, to relieve the distressed, and to comfort the afflicted, is marked in the strongest and most amiable features? Surely a candid man would be apt to imagine that such extraordinary language was called up by some extraordinary occasion; and that it possibly contained the declaration of some providential appointment on the part of God, whose will it was the professed business of Christ to unfold. To evade, however, the force of the argument, which is founded on the known benevolence of Christ, we may have recourse to a new supposition, and say, that Christ, having employed gentleness and meekness in the first introduction of his religion, was resolved to propagate it by the very opposite measures. The resolution itself is most improbable, and the means employed to give it effect are utterly irreconcileable to common sense. For, if it was indeed the settled pur-

pose of Jesus to spread dissentions among mankind, his precepts and example tended uniformly to defeat that purpose. To what end, I beseech you, did he exhort his followers to forgive his enemies? With what consistence did he pronounce a most exalted blessing upon the peace-makers? With what appearance of sincerity, or common decency, could he say that he came to save men's lives, when his fixed, and, according to this sense of the text, his avowed intention was to destroy them? Had the Founder of Christianity in reality formed the flagitious design blasphemously imputed to him, and had he thought himself justified in proclaiming it, why did he not point out to his disciples the turbulent measures, and encourage in them the seditious disposition, which seem necessary for so shocking an end? Was it likely that one solitary injunction would destroy the collective force of all his other precepts? Was the very hypocrisy, which lurked under his apparent meekness and lowliness, compatible with the audacity of an undistinguishing and undisguised hostility to all domestic comfort, and to all public security—to virtuous individuals and lawful governors—to the active sensibilities of self-preservation in the one, and to the jealous vigilance of power in the other? But certain it is that Christ, though he often mentions the persecutions and divisions that were to take place after his death, never once speaks of them in terms of unequivocal, positive applause —that he never recommends, directly or indirectly, a proud and contentious temper to his followers — and that he never gives the most distant promise of

protection to those acts of violence by which the harmony of families is interrupted, and the tranquillity of nations is disturbed. If, therefore, he did not speak this language in the odious sense which I am now combating, he has said nothing inconsistent with the character of a divine instructor. If he did speak them in that sense, we must confess that he wanted, not only the ordinary feelings of a human creature, but the ordinary sagacity even of the clumsiest and most illiterate deceiver.

Let us pursue this train of investigation. Is it not universally acknowledged that Christ, in propagating his doctrines, personally observed the most cautious conduct — that he never insulted the authority of magistrates—that he never violated the laws of his country — that he neither sought nor seized such opportunities as the prejudices of his countrymen would have afforded to a false Messiah for stirring up popular tumults, and grasping at illegal power? How, then, can we suppose him to have directed others to a behaviour so different from his own? For the text, as some men misunderstand, or rather misinterpret it, carries with it a positive direction for Christians not to pay the regard which Christ himself did pay to the peace of the community.

And surely if the immediate hearers of our Lord had supposed these words to convey a licence for his followers to violate the decorum of common life, and to commit all the outrages which the laws had forbidden, a proceeding of this kind would have instantly provoked accusation from the Jewish

teachers, and punishment from the Roman Government. But no consequence of this kind is recorded. Had the same words been considered by Christians themselves as giving a sanction to any kind of persecution, they would surely have found a place in the long catalogue of absurd reasonings which in various ages, and for various purposes, have been alleged by Christians as a justification for drawing the sword. But no such perverse use of them has ever been made, by either the visionary crusader, the gloomy inquisitor, or the frantic zealot who erected the standard in honour of King Jesus, and that to maintain the right of paying him an exclusive allegiance.

Again, is not Christianity allowed by its most determined enemies to possess a milder and more liberal genius than Judaism? Now the religious constitution of the Jews was intimately interwoven with the political; and hence arose the austere and intolerant rules, by which the institutions of Moses were fenced against encroachment. The Gospel, on the contrary, is attached to no particular system of polity. It is flexible to every possible modification of wise government; it is fortified by sanctions, which point to futurity; and it has not ordained any one temporal punishment for any offence of any kind, or any degree. If then Moses threw an appearance of justice around the severity of his laws, by specifying the offence, and ascertaining the penalty, is it credible that Jesus should give a peremptory commission promiscuously to his followers to harrass mankind without the forms of judicial pro-

cess, and without even the pretence of any transgression against an explicit and definite command?

Moses has, moreover, directed the Jews upon particular occasions, and in particular countries, to extirpate idolators with unrelenting severity. That severity was, however, antecedent, and even instrumental to the establishment of the Jewish policy. It was rarely exercised in ages that succeeded the firm and full establishment of that policy, and it did not extend beyond the borders of the Jewish state. But Christ, if the invidious exposition of my text be well founded, must be supposed to have authorized the most rigorous and inhuman measures, even *after* the establishment of his religion, to have authorized them in all places, and at all times, against all persons who would not embrace it.

Yet further, the religion of Mahomet, as well as Moses, is allowed to be of a more sanguinary complexion than that of Christ. But how will such a concession correspond with the sense of my text, if it be taken literally, according to the English idiom? Mahomet commanded his followers to unsheathe the sabre only against those whom he reputed infidels; but the words of Christ, if they are to be understood independently of any other precepts, and according to vulgar apprehensions, will justify his followers in persecuting each other. Nay, it is by implication only and just consequence, that they warrant cruelty against strangers and enemies; whereas they expressly and directly warrant it among neighbours and relations—among those, who are members of the same community and pro-

fessors of the same religion—among fathers and sons — among mothers-in-law, and daughters-in-law.

In this point of view, also, Christianity would be far more unsocial than Judaism. Among the Jews many bitter contentions arose upon religious topics; yet the disputants seldom proceeded to acts of direct personal violence. They never pleaded the commands of Moses in justification of the cruelties, into which they might have been hurried towards those, who differed from them in matters of their own law; and it is well known, that the Pharisee, the Sadducee, and the Essene, widely as they dissented upon points of speculation, and ceremony, partook of the same sacrifice and worshipped at the same altar. But if Christ's words contain the meaning, which upon the first view they seem to contain, he has authorized his disciples to run greater lengths in passion and uncharitableness than the Jews did. To greater lengths they have rushed. We confess and lament the fact. But the question before us is, whether the words of Christ were intended to justify the excesses of Christians?

Even the Pagan theology has been pronounced less adverse to the rights of nature, and less dangerous to the peace of the world, than the most corrupted mode of Christianity, which invested its priests with power to execute whatever was suggested to them by the hardiest ambition or the most rancorous revenge, and debased its votaries by superstition. The accusation, however humiliating, is not untrue; but how should we repel its force if it were

levelled immediately against the Gospel itself — as with justice and propriety it might be levelled, on the supposition that Christ expressed his desire to send a sword into the world, and consequently intimated his approbation of those who wielded it?

Now Christ must have known that a system which avowedly armed those who adopted it one against another, must have contained in its own bosom the seeds of its own destruction. Its enemies, taking the alarm, would by the most vigorous exertions, as well as upon the most justifiable motives, have endeavoured to check its progress. But if those endeavours had been disappointed, and Christianity had been established by force in the world, the very professors of it, after experiencing the inconveniences and dangers of mutual hatred, would at last surely have recovered from the delirium of religious zeal, and would have secured their own true interests by an avowed and general desertion of doctrines so fatally hostile to them. I am not roving in wild conjecture when I make this assertion. I am only stating what would have been done to Christianity itself — what has been done in respect to its various modes. For consider — as civilization and learning, as just government and rational religion, have gained ground among mankind, they become ashamed of persecution — they laugh at the thin disguise of sophistry which is spread over its deformity — and they have the satisfaction to find that Revelation has not countenanced what reason condems, and that, to be sound in faith,

it is not requisite for them to be previously destitute of humanity. Now if Christianity itself has conspired to produce these various causes, and even make a part of them, it forms a new presumption in favour of the manner in which I am explaining to you the text. If, on the contrary, you suppose the same causes to have existed (as in a course of time they probably might in a less degree have existed) independently of Christianity, and even in opposition to the pernicious tendency of the text, doubtless all good citizens, and all good men, would have disputed the pretensions of the Gospel to a divine original. They would have appealed from the doctrines of revealed religion to the sacred and indisputable authority of natural. They would not have been ensnared by splendid descriptions and flattering promises of a future life, into a contempt of all the comforts which well-regulated society affords, and all the generous duties it imposes in the present. They would have abandoned a scheme of faith irreconcileable to the fundamental principles of morality, injurious to the happiness of man, and derogatory to the honour of God.

What inference then must we draw from the preceding considerations? On the one side, it appears that the repeated and unequivocal acknowledgments of those who deny the preternatural excellence of the Gospel, are yet so decisive in favour of its moral utility, as to leave no room for any invidious construction upon the words of my text. Indeed such a construction is altogether incompatible with the benignity of temper and purity of

conduct which they are content to admire in the Founder of Christianity. It is no less incompatible with the total want of every allurement that gives success to intrigue, and of every resource for exercising oppression, which they are accustomed to ridicule in its immediate followers. An interpretation, therefore, which equally militates with the assertions of those who anxiously defend a system, and with the concessions of those who openly attack it, requires every support that can be furnished from solid reasoning and unequivocal evidence. But is this the case in the question before us? Assuredly it is not; for, on the other hand, if you believe Christ not only, on all other occasions, to have wished secretly, but upon this single occasion to have encouraged openly, the most shocking enormities, you fall into this very absurd and very inadmissible opinion, that an impostor of the most profligate ambition and atrocious cruelty that ever appeared in the world deliberately counteracted his own purposes — that he unnecessarily exposed the wickedness he ought to have concealed, and madly excited an opposition which he must be conscious of his own inability to repel.

In these observations you have a clear, and I believe, an apposite answer to the insolent and malignant sarcasm of a writer, whose taste is, in my opinion, as much disgraced by false wit, as his philosophy by false reasoning. Christ, says the author of the Characteristics, and his followers, preached up charity and love, the better to enable a set of men, some centuries afterwards, to tyrannize over

those, whom the engaging sounds of charity and brotherly love had entrapped into subjection. (vol. iii. p. 115.) But the insinuation is no less irreconcileable to fact, than it is in theory improbable. As a subterfuge it is without speciousness; it stands as an assertion without proof; and as an effort of raillery it defeats itself, because it is totally and notoriously destitute of decorum and justice.

I might rest the dispute upon this general issue; and by many it may be thought superfluous to pursue it any farther. But the instability and inconsistence of the human understanding, the disguises under which exploded errors insensibly recur, and the proneness of mankind to dwell upon the unfavourable side, the malice of our adversaries, and the weakness of our friends, compel me to be of a different opinion. Our enemies, overlooking or deriding the benevolent principles which pervade the greater part of the Gospel, will triumphantly expatiate on this particular passage, and avail themselves of its seeming ambiguity. Our friends, whatever conviction they may feel of the general charity which is inculcated by the Gospel, and whatever consolation they may derive from it, will sometimes find their thoughts staggered with doubt, and alarmed with apprehension, when they reflect on the menacing appearance which the words of my text must wear to unenlightened minds. For these reasons, I shall endeavour to confute every possible objection of the infidel, and to remove every possible scruple of the believer. From this series, then, of general observations, we may collect what the

meaning of Christ probably was *not*. I go now forward to the discussion of more direct and particular proofs, from which you may perceive what it actually *was*.

According to the soundest rule of logic, doubtful passages in every book ought to be explained by such as are direct and plain. Thus too, in the life of every man, detached actions, which wear the aspect of severity, ought to be measured by the general conduct of the agent, when that conduct is remarkable for the opposite qualities of mildness and clemency. But of these pleas, reasonable as they are, we need not avail ourselves in the present case; for the expression itself, as well as the relation in which it stands to other parts of this chapter, will justify an interpretation by no means dishonourable to our holy religion, or uninteresting to us who profess it. Consistently with the idiom of the original language the words *to send* are used not in a final, but an eventual sense; they denote not the intention of the agent, but the effects of his actions; they inform us, not that Christ absolutely designed to make his religion the cause of implacable violence, and outrageous hostility, but that through the fallible understandings, and uncontrolled passions of those who embraced it, his religion would be perverted into an instrument of evil to the persons, for whose supreme and ultimate good it was graciously communicated.

In the same manner, I would farther observe, we may vindicate some other passages of scripture, which have perplexed the judgments, and alarmed

the fears of many well-meaning persons. When it is said in our translation—"In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which said, this people's heart is waxed gross, lest at any time, they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them"—a critical attention to the original words will shew us, that there is nothing incompatible with the justice and mercy of God. For the true meaning of the words is this; the hearts of men were so hardened by a long course of voluntary sin, that according to the regular and stated operation of the human mind, they hearing, in fact did not understand; they seeing, in fact did not see. Now the difference of our interpretation from the sense, which offers itself to a hasty and superficial reader is of great moment both in respect to the passage just quoted, and to the text; and also it seems to me, that each expression elucidates and confirms our method of explaining the other, so as to form a general principle for the removal of all similar difficulties. In the sense which at first strikes us, we are at a loss to justify the attributes of God, if he, as it were, mocks his creatures with offering instruction, whilst he had by arbitrary decrees doomed them to an incapacity of comprehending. We should also, in the same manner, be compelled by our moral feelings to condemn the declaration of Christ, if he in reality preached his Gospel with a view to *send* variance on earth. But according to our explanation, which is most satisfactory to the learned, and most comfortable to

the proud. The whole blame of obduracy among the Jews, and of discord among Christians, remains with man only. The instruction of prophets was sent to enlighten the Jews, who were prevented from forming a right idea of that instruction by the obstinacy of their prejudices. A religion is vouchsafed to Christians in order to make them happy, which, however, in the event becomes to some of them a source of misery, through the violence of their passions, and the corruption of their hearts.

As I wish to fix upon your minds both the clearest apprehension and the most settled satisfaction about the real meaning of our Saviour, I shall close these remarks by shewing that the context agrees most obviously and most exactly with the interpretation I have adopted. In some of the preceding verses Christ, in a very copious and solemn manner, had laid before his Disciples the difficulties they were to endure, and the dangers they were to encounter in the promulgation of the Gospel. He informed them, that their integrity would be brought to a most severe test; and he holds out at once the most animating encouragement to those who should support their trial, and the most awful menaces against those who shrunk from it. Whosoever will confess me before men, him will I confess; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my father which is in heaven. Then the text immediately follows—think not I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. From this assertion he descends to a particular detail of the manner, in which

it would be accomplished; for I am come, saith he, to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother. Then he carries back his hearers to the point, on which he had before insisted, and which indeed was the leading object of his whole discourse—he that loveth father or mother, son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.

In the course of God's righteous but unsearchable providence, the fiercest resistance was to be expected by Christians, as well from their nearest relations, as from their bitterest enemies. But though they could not prevent these evils, they were not to sink under their pressure; for no relation was to be so far loved, nor any enemy so far dreaded, as to induce the disciples to forsake their master, by whom they were redeemed, or to renounce the truths of which they were persuaded. In the whole, therefore, of our Lord's address in the passages preceding the text, and those that follow it, Christ is actuated by a temper widely different indeed from violence and malevolence. He speaks of the mischiefs his true followers were to suffer, not to inflict; instead of inciting them to commit injury, he teaches them to bear, and forbids them to retaliate. He instructs them in the duties of patience and fortitude; the first of which is unquestionably friendly to the quiet of society, and the last was indispensibly necessary for the establishment of his religion. He encourages them, not to kill the body, but to be fearless of those who were able and willing to kill it—not to hate all men for the name of Christ, but to bear up against the hatred of those who were

enemies to that name—not to attack the lives of their fellow-creatures, but to sacrifice their own.

In respect therefore to our Lord's immediate disciples, he acted a fair part in informing them of the evils which hung over them. He acted a wise part in preparing them for the shock. He acted a generous part in curbing their resentments, and in teaching them, by the brightest example, as well as the most solemn injunctions, to count it all joy when they were thought worthy to suffer for the sake of truth. But if we may judge of our Lord's meaning from the extent in which it seems to have been realized—if similar facts will warrant a similar application of this passage to them, we may with great propriety suppose him to have had in view many distant as well as present obstacles, not merely to the external propagation of his Gospel, but to its proper efficacy on the lives of its professors. He probably directed his expression, not only to the cruel disasters which awaited his disciples, when they were persecuted by the Jews and Gentiles, but to those also which disturbed the repose and corrupted the innocency of Christians, when they began to persecute each other. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that he designed or approved of persecution in either case; and therefore the only inference that we can draw from the text is, that Christ foresaw, and meant to foretell, and implicitly to condemn, the unhappy disputes and calamities that would arise after his return to his Father. In foreseeing them, he gave a decisive proof of that wisdom which discerned the most improbable and dis-

cordant causes working together for the same great end, and ultimately contributing to diffuse and confirm the religion which at first they might be supposed to obstruct. In foretelling them, he puts his sincere followers upon their guard against the influence of every headstrong and malignant passion. In condemning them, he designed to shelter, and, in the estimation of all impartial judges, effectually has sheltered his religion from the infamy incurred by those who have neither the good sense to understand its letter, nor the generosity to catch its spirit, nor the honesty to observe its injunctions.

I shall conclude the present discourse with these plain, but interesting observations. An impostor would have been willing to colour over the dark side of things, and would have ostentatiously described the auspicious effects of his doctrines, and the prosperous state of his followers. But Christ, you see, most forcibly and most copiously dwells on the evils that would arise from his doctrines, and treats with equal severity the crimes of those who admitted, and those who disbelieved them. We are therefore authorized by the words of my text to suspect the sincerity, and to censure the inconsistency of all persons who would use their Christian liberty as a cloak for maliciousness—who employ the sacred name of religion for a sanction to the most impious actions—and while they intentionally disturb the happiness of mankind, pretend to be solicitous for the honour of God.

The honour of God arises from the happiness of his creatures; and that happiness is effectually pro-

moted by a religion, the Author of which, both in his words and actions, has endeavoured to establish peace among us upon earth, as well as to secure felicity for us in heaven.

But if the excellence of all religion is to be measured by its utility, do not such instances of superstition, stubbornness, and cruelty in Christians, tend to weaken our veneration, and to stagger our belief, of the Gospel itself? As to the fact, I reply that Christianity has, upon the whole, produced a far greater share of good than of evil — that in what it explicitly teaches, or positively commands, no evil whatsoever has arisen—that the errors and vices of its professors are to be traced up to other sources than their religion — that by this religion both are expressly condemned, and both so far prevented, as seems to have been possible with beings whose intellectual and moral constitution is like that of man. As to the right it yet asserts to our faith, good sense bids us distinguish between the use and abuse of every good gift; experience tells us, that as the use is profitable the abuse is dangerous; and analogy may inform us, that Christianity, from the mixed state of things in which it was taught, and yet is believed, stands upon a footing with all the moral and natural dispensations of its Author. Are not all the crimes in the world produced by an excessive self-love, or a mistaken benevolence? Yet self-love is the spring, and benevolence the end, of all virtue. Do not the convulsions and seeming irregularities of nature proceed from the laws of gravitation, and of attraction and repulsion? Yet

from these laws is also the beauty, order, and, in our apprehension perhaps, the very existence of such objects as are discernible by our senses; and by the constancy and intenseness of their operation, all things conspire for our happiness and our preservation. Christianity, misunderstood and disobeyed, may have occasioned the sword of oppression to be lifted up; but it has diffused sentiments of peace more widely and more effectually than any other religion, which human wisdom has devised, or human authority supported.

Evil terminating in itself cannot be reconciled to the nature of a wise Creator; but evil productive of ultimate good, in our conceptions, may properly make, and in our experience actually has made, a part of the moral government under which we live. Now, why the same evil should not be designed for the same ends in the Christian dispensation —why, if designed by the great Contriver of that dispensation, it should not be known to the immediate Dispenser of it — and, if known, why it should not be declared, peculiarly as a proof of his foresight, and in common with all other moral precepts, addressed to those who are likely to violate them, as a warning to his followers—these are questions which it is no very easy task to establish in the negative.

# SERMON XXX.

MATTHEW x. 34.

*Think not I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

IN a late discourse I endeavoured to rescue these words from the misconceptions of ignorance, and the misrepresentations of infidelity, by a series both of presumptive and direct proofs. I shewed you that they were intended to predict, but not to justify the evils of which Christianity has been eventually productive; and therefore that they may with more propriety be alleged by the friends of the Gospel in proof of Christ's wisdom, than by the enemies of it, as instances of his cruelty.

Now if our Lord had magnificently described peace and harmony as the immediate consequences of his religion, you would have opposed the solid evidence of fact to the unsupported authority of assertion. If he had coldly, and, as it were, incidentally mentioned all the unfortunate and unjustifiable divisions that have arisen among his followers, you would have been offended at the languor of his feelings—but when he repeatedly foretells, and most

expressly condemns those divisions, he surely cuts off all possibility of fair complaint against the want of foresight, or the want of consistence.

As my last discourse was intended to obviate the speculative objections of those who disbelieve the Gospel, the present will be employed in strengthening the conviction, and in regulating the conduct, of those by whom it is sincerely admitted. I then endeavoured to establish the fact, that Christ predicted, but did not countenance religious contention. I shall now go forward to the discussion of such questions as the fact thus established naturally suggests to every serious believer; for surely it is of the highest importance for us to know how far what Christ predicted has been accomplished, and whether it be practicable for us to avoid what he has not countenanced. Let us therefore in the third place, consider the proofs which history supplies in confirmation of the prophecy contained in my text.

By a writer,* who is justly celebrated for the depth of his learning, and the keenness of his penetration, it has been said, that unarmed prophets never were successful. The observation, as applied to the conduct of Christ himself, is notoriously unjust. And if it be just in its application to all other teachers, we deduce from it a new argument in favour of the Gospel, and we contend, that the true religion neither required, nor employed those hateful expedients, which were indispensably necessary to the establishment of falsehood, and inva-

* Machiavel.

riably used by those who patronized it. Assuredly the triumphs of Christ over the prejudices and vices of his hearers were effected without the stratagems of policy, and without the tumults of conquest. They derived their success from the social wisdom, the exemplary virtue, and the preternatural powers of our righteous master. They were obtained without any artifice to beguile those who were endowed with an honest simplicity of heart, and without any compulsion to subdue men who were of an impetuous or refractory spirit. Such, if we speak comparatively, was the easy and calm progress of the Gospel during the life of Christ. For violence was then confined to his person; it took its rise from his enemies always; and it was retaliated by his friends in one instance only, when the servant of the chief priest was wounded by the indignant apostle, and in the very same moment was healed by his compassionate master. But after the death of Christ the prospect is overspread with a thicker and more inauspicious gloom. Those malignant passions which had vented their fury upon the mild and unresisting Founder of the Gospel, now extended themselves to his numerous followers. And, indeed, if we reflect upon the pride and obstinacy of the Jewish nation, we shall not wonder at the excess to which they carried their opposition to the doctrines of our Lord, or at the rooted and implacable hatred which they conceived against any of their countrymen who taught or embraced them. Such is the perverseness of the human will, and such too often the depravity of the human heart,

that opposite effects are in different circumstances worked out by causes seemingly similar; and that they who in seasons of tranquillity are the objects of our kindest affections, become in times of discord the victims of our most implacable resentments. Hence all the endearments of domestic relation, and all the bonds of social and religious intercourse, by which those who adhered to Christ had been once united to those who rejected him, served only to make the guilt of a pretended apostacy from Judaism more flagrant, in the eyes of men who were themselves too stubborn to be converted, and too malicious to be soothed.

When Christianity was preached among the Gentiles, the reproach which was by implication cast upon their impure and monstrous system of popular belief, necessarily called forth a most determined spirit of opposition. Ashamed to transfer their hopes and fears from a host of subordinate deities to the one unknown God, and afraid to embrace a scheme of morality very adverse to the sensual gratifications in which they had without remorse indulged themselves, they thought no indignity too gross, no injury too oppressive, if it tended to check the progress of the Gospel. The intrinsic purity of the Christian religion, and the consistency with which it was supported, exposed its advocates to peculiar hardships. Paganism, destitute as it was, not only of divine authority, but of any fixed principle in reason, indiscriminately and eagerly patronized any number of Gods, and any traditions concerning their attributes and actions. Christianity,

on the contrary, not only excluded the multitude of heathen deities, but all their impurities, and all the absurd, impious qualities ascribed to them. It therefore appeared harsh and unsocial in the eyes of the vulgar, who were attached to their ancient theology, and of the philosophers, who looked down with contempt upon all forms of religion, new or old, whether rational or absurd.

Unhappily too for the first teachers of the Gospel, both the passions of the vulgar and the pride of the philosopher were supported by the tyranny of the magistrate. And hence arose that long train of persecutions which harassed the Christian Church before the time of Constantine. But if the blood of the martyrs was shed wantonly and barbarously by the enemies of the Gospel, we might expect that after its establishment by the civil power all would be peace and harmony among its friends. This expectation, alas! however reasonable, is disappointed by the contentions of Christians themselves. While Christianity was yet in its infancy, and various adversaries were conspiring to stifle it before it could arrive at its full vigour, a most violent debate about the celebration of Easter had severed the Asiatic and European churches. In Constantine's time it was unnecessarily and angrily revived, for the purpose of settling what might have been safely and properly left undetermined, because no determination could add to the credibility of the fact commemorated, or elevate the rational piety of those by whom it was believed.

But the disputes upon this subject were inconsi-

derable, when compared with all the acts of cruel intolerance and impious dogmatism, which followed upon the controversy between the partizans and the opponents of Athanasius. Senseless and groundless distinctions were multiplied every day. The Church was split into innumerable factions, who were actuated by a shameless emulation in presumption and uncharitableness. The sword was lifted up by the father against the son, and all thoughts of peace were laid aside by those who were of the same household. It would be a painful task to expatiate upon the intemperate debates which were agitated in some succeeding ages — upon the insolence and barbarity of the victorious parties — or upon the malignity which rankled in the bosom of the vanquished, who eagerly seized every opportunity of retaliation. To say the fact, whatever doctrines they might be anxious to disseminate, and by whatever spirit they might profess to be influenced, it seems, by a kind of fatality, to have been the disgrace of every party, not to have acted up to the dignity of that virtue, which St. Paul has emphatically called charity. All of them seem to have exchanged the humbleness of adversity for the insolence of power — to have passed at once from patience under wrong to impatience of control—to have felt the inclination, as soon as they had acquired the ability to oppress—and, in short, to have disregarded every virtue, which they had formerly commended—to have refused every indulgence, which they had formerly solicited—and to have heaped without compunction those severities upon others, of which

themselves had complained without redress. But when the Church of Rome gained the ascendancy, all tranquillity and concord were banished from the Christian world. Hence the progress of that Church to an unprecedented and intolerable dominion is marked by destructive wars, by secret conspiracies, by the assassination of prelates and princes, and by convulsions in the laws and government of various states. Were history indeed silent upon the occasion, we might justly conclude, that mankind would not have been reconciled to the irrational tenets and daring pretensions of the Romish Church without long and vigorous struggles. During those struggles, the still voice of reason was lost among the clamours of the angry controversialists; all the worst affections of the mind were inflamed, and mankind were hurried by superstition and bigotry into the most horrid excesses of fraud and injustice. We must not forget that the power of this Church has been uniformly supported by the same means which first established it. The contest for supremacy on the part of the Pope at Rome over the Patriarch of Constantinople, who claimed an independency; the formal declaration against heretics in the Popedom of Alexander the Third; the ridiculous yet barbarous severities exercised against the Jews; the romantic and unprovoked depredations committed against the Saracens; the unjust punishments inflicted upon those who attempted a reformation in different ages in different countries; the open institution of the inquisitorial court—that most terrible and irresistible engine of spiritual

tyranny; the execrable barbarities committed at the massacre of St. Bartholomew; the sanguinary fury of the inflamed rabble, and the unrelenting vengeance of a bigoted king—these, I say, are decisive proofs of the justice with which our Saviour predicted the sad effects of perverted religion. They are melancholy indications of the depravity, to which human nature may be debased by superstition and blind zeal, when leagued, as they often are leagued, with pride, rapacity, and malevolence. As contentions in states often take their rise from the restlessness of the strong to trample upon the feeble, so the mischievous consequences of religious disputes may be generally ascribed to the combination of the worst members in the community against the most useful. For against whom is the sword of persecution for the most part lifted up? Against men of enlightened understanding and exalted spirits—men who glow with a generous love of knowledge, and who feel a jealous solicitude for the dearest rights of their species — men who have the sagacity to hunt down imposture through all the labyrinths of scholastic theology, and the courage to maintain truth amidst the denunciations of ecclesiastical vengeance. By whom too is it pointed? Not merely by the sullen and vindictive bigot, or the captious and heated enthusiast, but by the wily and unprincipled statesman, who, acting under the veil of piety, is always ready to take advantage of vulgar credulity and popular phrenzy—to make religious hypocrisy the surer and more fatal engine of political—and to entangle the pretended interests of

the Gospel with the real interests of despotism. A man of this description acts with the most detestable, but formidable consistence, when he looks with an eye of malignant suspicion upon that curious and intrepid spirit of investigation, which, by separating what is artfully and unnaturally blended together, would drag to light the deceitfulness of his professions, the futility of his claims, and the destructive tendency of his purposed machinations.

I have already mentioned to you the checks by which the Church of Rome endeavoured to confine the bold and extensive range of free inquiry—the artifices by which she seduced the incautious—the terrors by which she kept the most daring in subjection, and all the various means she employed to fortify her arrogant pretensions, and to arm in support of them the sharpest and most untractable passions which agitate the mind of man. It is however to be acknowledged, and it is to be also lamented, that the same spirit which had raged with unbridled fierceness among the advocates of Popery, was not without some share of its baleful influence among the reformed. The choleric and haughty Calvin had risen to eminence by his animated and well-founded invectives against the cruelties, as well as the absurdities of the Romish Church; yet the opponents of his wild and cheerless system unhappily sunk under the weight of his displeasure; for we read of this distinguished reformer, that he dragged the supposed heretic to the stake, not merely with the insolence of a champion who had conquered his antagonist, but with the more horrid

deliberation of the self-deluded, self-applauding enthusiast, who boasts of doing God service, when he at once, at one effectual blow, cuts off the offender from existence here, and hurries him into the torments thought to be reserved for him hereafter. The zealous Luther, while he shrunk from the idea of destroying his fellow-creatures, yet admitted the propriety of every penal severity which fell short of the bitterness of death. Even the amiable, though unfortunate Servetus, allowed the justice of banishment; and upon the rigours, I ought to say the barbarities, which the wise and pious Cranmer not only permitted, but exercised—is there one among you who can reflect without a blush and without a tear? To accomplish by force what ought to have been the effect of persuasion—to confound the interests of an upstart and petty sect with the general credit of the Gospel—to rush precipitately into expedients, which served only to gratify the ambition of those who had led a religious party, or the malevolence of those who had adhered to it—to diffuse a wide and rooted hatred of all Christians, who maintained different opinions with equal sincerity, and perhaps defended them with superior abilities—to interrupt the repose of nations, and to shake the very foundations of all lawful government—to spill the righteous blood of men who would not adopt what they thought erroneous, and would not utter what they supposed false—to fall into these weaknesses and these crimes was, I fear, the fate even of those who had nobly burst asunder the shackles of Romish despotism. But if the effects

are thus terrible, who can suppress the mingled emotions of contempt, indignation, and sorrow, when he considers that their primary causes were in themselves so trifling, and in the estimation of any wise man, so disproportionate to those effects? For upon what have the passions of men blazed out? Upon points of remote use or barren speculation—upon the babble of ignorance or the jargon of sophistry—in conjectures decorated by refinement, or assumptions fortified by dogmatism—on factitious mysteries, unworthy of attention from a good man, or on real difficulties incapable of decision among the most learned. Thus we are not less amazed at the impious tenets, than shocked at the vindictive dispositions of those who presided at the Council of Dort. In England we are disgusted at the sullen obstinacy of some puritans, at the brutal ferocity of others, and at the insolent domination of their headstrong and infatuated oppressors. In Scotland we see the progress of reformation accompanied by the most wanton indignities to the majesty of the laws—by the most alarming shocks to the stability of the government—by the gloomy and fantastic austerities of mortification, and by an irrational, unnatural system of faith, which chilled the ardour of social benevolence, and substituted the fear of God for the love of man.

But from these hideous degradations of our nature—from these abuses of a religion which was intended to purify and exalt it, turn we aside to other and more pleasing scenes. In looking back to past ages, the mind recoils instantly from that huge mass

of evils, which, by accomplishing the prophesy of Christ, tends indeed to establish the credibility of his Gospel, and yet leaves us under melancholy impressions from its limited efficacy. But in comparing those ages with the present, we find abundant source of consolation; and it is for the purpose of preserving you against the return of these pernicious contentions, that I hold up to you the faults of men whom you are accustomed to reverence—faults however which their example can never consecrate, and which in these more enlightened and more civilized times, their posterity, I hope, will never repeat. Alarmed we may be, on a superficial view, at the quick and daring strides of infidelity; but we may exchange terror for exultation, when we reflect on the rapid improvement of mankind in the knowledge of genuine Christianity—on the wide dissemination of tolerating principles—and on the prosperous growth of those social virtues, which every revelation professing to come from God may be reasonably expected to cherish. The spirit of toleration, indeed, after triumphing over the difficulties by which the senseless prejudices or groundless timidity, the shameless selfishness, or merciless rigour of individuals had long clogged it, is now beginning to struggle with the more formidable obstacles, which are thrown in its way by priest-craft and state-craft, by spiritual pride and insatiable ambition. Already has it convinced the governors of Popish as well as Protestant countries, that their proper employment is to protect the civil rights, but not to tyrannize over the consciences of their subjects; and that

their best interests require them, instead of lifting up the sword of persecution, to wrest it from the hands of every presumptuous and inexorable zealot. The same spirit will, I trust, in a short time convince the most deluded and bigoted among the people, that Christianity is to be defended only by the reasonings, as it can be adorned only by the lives of its various professors—that diversity of opinion is quite compatible with integrity of heart—that all the duties of civilized life can be faithfully performed, and therefore all its privileges ought to be unreservedly enjoyed by every pious sectary who trusts to his Redeemer, and I am not ashamed to add, by every honest man who acknowledges and worships a God. To stop short of this concession is to recall and re-establish the principles by which the wretched cause of persecution is propped up. To avow that concession, and to act from it—to avow it, I mean, without disingenuous reservation, and to act from it without invidious distinction, is to support our real dignity as reasonable creatures, as good citizens, and as consistent Christians. Doubtless the true spirit of religion is to be found under every form of government, and every mode of faith. The noblest ends of religion is to connect the service of God with the love of man; and depend upon it, my brethren, the very choicest rewards of religion are in reserve for those worthy men who employ their talents in the retired silence of private life, or their authority in the state, to promote peace on earth.

In my former discourse I endeavoured by ana-

logical reasons to repel those objections to which Christianity is exposed, as the indirect occasion of many evils among its professors; but as rational Christianity, together with all its attendant virtues, shall be established among mankind, the advocate of the Gospel, as a divine revelation, will be engaged in the easier and more pleasant task. Instead of toiling through the crooked and tedious proofs of analogy—instead of exhorting you to acquiesce in evils darkly and confusedly intermixed with good, he will boldly call upon you to rejoice in them when actually and visibly productive of it. Mankind, I know, as they feel the utility, will be more disposed to admit the truth of any religious system, and I say with confidence, for the honour of the Gospel, that as by its letter it does not encourage persecution, so by its spirit it does encourage every moral principle and every benevolent feeling which can be friendly to toleration. The text indeed exhibits a very dismal and mortifying picture of the Christian world; history also confirms the justness of the representation; and when you consider the uncommon malignity of the passions on subjects of religion, you will not be surprised at the earnestness of Christ, in foretelling all the complicated distresses, and in condemning all the aggravated curses of his divided and corrupted Church.

Proceed we, therefore, in the last place to examine the more secret and baneful causes of religious contention. They lurk, indeed, so deeply in the dark recesses of the heart, as to escape superficial observers; but they are so closely interwoven with

our moral agency, and operate upon it so forcibly as to have attracted the notice, and justified the predictions of him, who at a glance pierced into the most hidden and complex constitution of our minds—who was eminently skilled in what the first moral philosopher among the ancients, and the first didactic poet among the moderns, have pronounced the proper study of mankind, or as it is expressed in the beautiful and nervous simplicity of Scripture—who knew what was in man. The original and ordinary causes into which religious strife may be resolved, are the prejudices of education, the pride of opinion, the extravagant admiration of ourselves and supercilious contempt of others, which superior sanctity inspires. With these is often combined the lust of wealth, or domination, or fame; and powerful as are these springs of action, they pass unsuspected through the infatuation of those upon whom they operate; or they put on some treacherous appearance, which conceals from us their deformity, and reconciles us to their excesses. Where ambition and worldly policy are the ruling passions of men, and prompt them to any difficult undertakings, it is not impossible for persons of large experience and correct observation to calculate their probable effects. But when zeal without knowledge inflames the mind—when the vehemence of fanaticism is united with the stubborness of bigotry, all conjecture about the mischief of which they are capable, is baffled. The religious spirit, as it is called, assumes so many strange disguises—it co-operates with so many different affections—it avails itself so dextrously of ex-

ternal and collateral circumstances — it retires so suddenly, and so suddenly rallies—it is so prepared alike for deep intrigue and desperate outrages—it is so capable of stooping to every meanness, and rushing into every extravagance—it starts up in so many various shapes of the most volatile caprice and invincible stubbornness, that scarce any sagacity can foresee, or any intrepidity resist its efforts. The worst measures are then contemplated with approbation, adopted with eagerness, and prosecuted with unfeeling obstinacy, and with unwearied perseverance; because they are supposed to be subservient to the best ends; and the best ends are usually the establishment of error, of fraud, and of usurpation—the success of measures to which the hardness of the heart is scarce adequate, unless assisted by the delusions of the head—the accomplishment of designs, which, as they do violence to the common-sense and common feelings of mankind, require an uncommon degree of preparatory depravation in the affections and understandings of those who are to execute them. Subtlety is then confounded with wisdom, and outrage is sanctified with the name of zeal. To add contumely to oppression—to impute the opinions of our adversaries to the most invidious motives, and trace them through a series of the most frightful consequences—are excesses which, upon other occasions, indeed, we should not scruple to charge with gross indecency and savage malevolence; but which in religious matters are weakly or insidiously ascribed to an honest indignation. To break asunder the ties of domestic relation—to turn

a deaf ear to the remonstrances of friends, the supplications of children, and the commands of parents, is, in the language of the bigot, to possess that elevated and heroic virtue, which justly estimates the claims of jarring obligations, and inflexibly pursues things spiritual in preference to things temporal. Thus the deceitful suggestions of fancy are suffered to predominate over the dictates of reason and the sensibilities of nature.

But further—where the end is supposed to sanctify the means, all the common operations of the mind are inverted. Men exult in their superiority to the restraints of fear and shame. The dangers which generally suspend the mind in inaction, now rouse it to a more daring ardour of enterprise. The very magnitude and extent of evils enhance the merit of inflicting them; and without one check from conscience—nay, with the most vigorous impulses from self-applause—mankind let loose all their acrimonious and intemperate passions, and are proud to see desolation mark the career of their victories. Sometimes the presumptuous boldness of character, the eager hopes, the impious self-confidence, which distinguish enthusiasm, have incited men to a contempt of the established duties of life, and have burst upon the peace of society with the rapid and invincible fury of a tempest. Superstition has at other times worked a more slow, but equally fatal effect. It has rendered the heart more callous than enthusiasm can render it, to every delicate and generous feeling. In critical situations it has suddenly called in the aid of the enthusiastic spirit itself, in order to invigorate the

natural sluggishness of its own exertions, and to secure more effectually the attainment of its favorite object. Imbecility and timidity are, I know, the usual characteristics of superstition; but while it yokes the mind in subjection to certain monstrous opinions and certain ambitious leaders, it prepares men, at the same time, for every project, however hazardous and however flagitious, which the craft of those leaders may recommend, or the interests of those opinions may seem to demand. This assertion may be equally justified from philosophy and from experience. Philosophy applies to religious struggles the remark that has often been made upon political ones — that in minds which have long groaned under the galling pressure of bondage, the sallies of rage are instantaneous and impetuous, produced by the slightest causes, and followed up by the most flagrant excesses. Experience informs us, that among the Roman Catholics, whose striking feature is superstition, barbarities have been committed more frequent and more horrible than can be imputed to any of the sects which are characterized by fanaticism.

Distinctions are, I am aware, made between the inherent malignity of opinions, and the characters of individuals, who embrace them. I confess too, that in some situations, it were want of wisdom to overlook, and want of candour to disregard those distinctions. The natural tempers, the acquired habits, the exterior condition of men, may counteract, in some degree, the force of depraved opinions. But we should also recollect, that each of these

causes may come in aid of such opinions; and that, where they do not immediately act in this manner, every religious system, which interests the ambition and malevolence of man in its support, tends, by a constant, though unsuspected influence, to corrupt the manners of its adherents, and to disturb the tranquillity of the world.

Through an unhappy combination of outward circumstances, and amidst the violent collisions of contending parties, the intrinsic excellence of religion itself, the clearness of its evidences, the purity of its precepts, and the awfulness of its sanctions, produce and perpetuate the very mischiefs, which, in seasons of dispassionate and impartial investigation, they either avert or mitigate. They incite us to pronounce hastily and indiscriminately, that the rejection of them is to be ascribed only to contumacy of temper, or licentiousness of morals. They bestow upon debates either remotely, or artificially, or even ideally connected with them an importance, which sharpens the edge of every passion, which heightens every illusion of the imagination, and seduces reason itself to vindicate every rigour of compulsion. Hence in the tumults of popular clamour, and the paroxysms of popular rage, even the worthiest men are too apt to forget the usual candour of their judgments, the usual moderation of their tempers, and the usual rectitude of their conduct. They catch, by a kind of contagion, the general frenzy. They are seized imperceptibly and incurably with that shameless audacity which confederated numbers inspire. They re-echo the sense-

less and virulent invectives, which, in their cooler moments, they would have despised. They sometimes approve of the severities, at which the natural goodness of their hearts would, upon other occasions, have made them shudder. Or if the remains of languishing virtue forbid them to take an active part on the theatre of persecution, they can seldom summon up the courage to prevent what they have not acquired sufficient obduracy to perpetrate. Blind to the real springs of action in other men, and inattentive to the real tendency of the measures they adopt, and are thought to dignify by adoption, they become the unsuspecting dupes of cunning, and the involuntary instruments even of the most abandoned wickedness. But, if intemperate zeal can thus misguide even men of enlarged understandings, and benevolent dispositions—if it goads them on to acts of cruelty, and then by a kind of enchantment lulls their conscience into insensibility—can we wonder at the more atrocious wickedness, into which other men are precipitated? For other men are actuated by baser motives, and stimulated, it may be, by passions habitually malevolent. They have neither sagacity to discover all the difficulties, which prevent the most diligent and unprejudiced inquirers from attaining truth, nor the liberality to feel that compulsion is equally unbecoming and unavailing in the correction of error.

Against these evils, then, so treacherous and fatal to the innocence of the best men, so calculated to enlarge the sphere of their malignant activity among the worst, we must exercise the most unremitted

vigilance. For this purpose we should, with the most piercing discernment, and with the steadiest resolution, explore our own hearts, which in the concerns of religion far less frequently deceive others than ourselves. In opposition to a very common and a very dangerous partiality, which limits toleration to the extent, in which our own particular tenets make it useful for ourselves to be tolerated, we should endeavour to cultivate the most enlarged and exalted sentiments of Christian charity. We should recollect, that as our own inquiries are stretched through a wider compass, or the objects of them are exhibited through different mediums, it is possible for us to fall into the very opinions we now condemn, and to stand in need of the indulgence we are secretly inclined to withhold. Nay, as such a change of sentiment is perfectly consistent with a sincere love of truth, and may be the result of our own honest and laborious attempts to investigate it, we ought to suppose other men influenced by the same honourable principles, and therefore entitled to the same favourable construction, and to the same gentle treatment, we should ourselves expect.

To those who linger on in one unvaried state of torpid indifference, or slavish credulity it were useless to appeal. The laziness of the drone usually unites with the pertinacity of the bigot, and it is no wonder that men of such characters should startle at the activity they never felt, and be desirous to crush that freedom of investigation which tends to lay bare their mistakes, or to rouse them from their slumber. But I am now addressing myself to men who have pursued their researches with keenness of cu-

riosity, and who have conducted them with intenseness of application; and who, while looking abroad on the spacious and crowded circle of human knowledge, sometimes turn back their attention upon themselves, and explore all the latent and intricate operations of their own minds. Let them compare any distant periods of their life, in which their opinions on some dark or perplexed topics stood respectively in direct opposition to each other. Whatever revolutions they may have undergone in speculations, which they once thought most momentous, and most decided, can they really discern any subsequent decay in their moral habits — are they less valuable members of the community — less honest men — or less sincere believers? Even in cases where a change of sentiment has been followed up by an improvement in virtue, would such improvement have taken place if their understandings had not been previously convinced—and could such salutary conviction have been produced by force instead of argument? We can reason about others only from what we experience in ourselves. Whether, therefore, we suppose men not to be worse for differing from our own tenets, or whether we expect them to become better after acceding to them, in neither case is there the shadow of a justification for lifting up the scourge of persecution. Severity, in the first case, would be unjust as well as cruel, because no fault is supposed—in the second, it would be unwise, as well as inhuman, because it tends not to the removal of the fault; and seriously, if plain, but momentous, truths were frequently contem-

plated, they would evince the inefficacy of compulsion to produce any good effects, and its tendency to multiply and to perpetuate the worst. He indeed that would secure himself from all the possible evils into which he may be hereafter betrayed, in situations yet unexpected, and unexperienced — he that seriously reflects upon the weaknesses of the wisest men, and the crimes even of the most virtuous, in the ferment of religious contentions, will be in haste to provide for the present and future preservation of his own integrity. He will studiously avoid the first steps towards intolerance — he will boldly strip off all the specious colouring which has been thrown over persecution—he will cautiously bar up every avenue of his soul against those harsh and foul suspicions, which silently steal in upon the mind, and venomously prey upon its tenderest and noblest sensibilities.

In the conclusion of this discourse I shall point out the most effectual methods of preserving, even in the most trying situation, that candour in our own opinions, and that liberality in our behaviour towards other men, which I am now most earnestly recommending to you. It is the property of infinite benevolence to descend from the whole to parts; and among those parts the Christian dispensation holds a very distinguished place in the moral system to which we belong. On the other hand, the charity of man must diffuse itself gradually from one part of his species to another—from those who adopt our own religious modes of belief to all the various parties of Christians, and from Christians

themselves to the advocates for every other system of religion. It has been pertinently and energetically observed, that he who says he loves God, but hates his neighbour, is a liar. And shall we hesitate then to urge the accusation of inconsistence and insincerity against those who, while they harbour unkind sentiments, and meditate, perhaps, some vindictive plan against any neighbouring sects of religionists, yet profess I know not what large and generous love of mankind? For if we defame or injure those with whom we may live in a constant state of social intercourse, what affection can we be supposed to retain for others whose public and private interests are entirely separate from our own; and whose different manners, habits of thinking, and modes of worship, are imperfectly known by us, and, if known more exactly, might be more severely condemned? Let us then, my brethren, upon the basis of mutual toleration, fix the principles of a genuine, uniform, and consistent philanthropy. Let us recommend Christianity to the approbation of all wise and all good men, by the kind and liberal disposition which it excites in us, not only to the pious Christian who joins in our worship, but to the supposed heretic who conscientiously disapproves of it—to the impartial doubter who modestly declines it—to the unenlightened heathen who understands it not—and even to the profane scoffer who misrepresents and insults it. Above all things, let us secure our own personal interests in the covenanted mercies of the Gospel, not by

lifting up the sword, but by cherishing peace—not by frivolous and angry contentions about the tenets of Paul, and the authority of Cephas, but by honest and strenuous endeavours to imbibe the benevolent spirit, and conform to the righteous example of Christ himself.

Finally, let us recollect, that as the Deity neither grants nor withholds in vain, the present life was probably intended, not for speculation where few can atchieve much, but for action where all may deserve well—that our intellectual defects may be instrumental to our moral improvement—that from our ignorance and our doubts we may learn moderation, which is an easier, and perhaps a nobler, acquisition than the understanding of all mysteries. May God Almighty impress on the hearts of you, who now hear me these interesting truths—may he prepare you by their influence for the arrival of that awful hour, when the proudest of us will be abashed with the scantiness of his attainments—when the wisest of us will be compelled to feel, what he now acknowledges faintly and insincerely, the feebleness of his powers—and when both will anxiously wish to have secured the pardon of numberless uncorrected, undiscovered errors, by the practice of that charity which thinketh no evil.

The foregoing Sermon was written for Professor White, and a large portion of it preached by him on an anniversay of the Gunpowder Plot, for which occasion, after the word "malevolence," (p. 209) Dr. Parr added—

From this general representation of the enormities by which the Church of Rome have tarnished the lustre of Christianity, while it fulfilled the prediction of Christ himself, I now proceed, in the last place, to consider that dreadful project which our Legislature has commanded us seriously to recollect on this day—a command which shows at once their gratitude in reminding us of past blessings, and their wisdom in warning all future generations against the repetition of the same crimes, and the return of the same danger.

And after the words, "of those who are to execute them," (p. 217)—

Of these observations we have a frightful instance in the conspiracy of this day, which in the greatness of its object, the suddenness of its contrivance, and the character of its agents, is almost unparalleled in any history of any age.

The aim of the conspirators was not to procure the forcible repeal of one or more offensive laws, but a total subversion of religion and government. It was levelled, not against any supposed number of oppressors, but against friend or foe, who might from curiosity or duty be assembled in Parliament. It devoted to destruction, not an arbitrary minister, or despotic king, but the whole legislative body without dis-

tinction. The scheme itself seems to have been neither started nor patronized by the rich and powerful, by men of political intrigue or popular influence. In secrecy it was planned by two or three misguided men, who communicated the contagion of their wickedness to a few more, when all of them, without any settled and systematic views of following up the blow, determined to execute one of the most perilous and flagitious designs which the human heart ever conceived. No sense of danger, no consciousness of guilt, seemed to have affected them while the deed was preparing. Detection itself did not awaken them to shame. They acknowledged, and probably felt, no other anguish but what arose from the disappointment of their detestable purpose. Their infatuation hardened them equally against the accusations of the Papists, and the menaces of the Protestants. To the last hour they persisted in disclaiming every intention, which appeared to themselves criminal or dishonourable. And as to the extensiveness of the destruction which they had planned, it only furnished them with matter of exultation, even in the trying moments of a painful and ignominious death.

For the credit of the general body of the Catholics, it must be acknowledged, that they disclaimed and condemned the whole plan; but for the dishonour of the Romish Church, it must be remarked, that the peculiar tendency of its doctrines and spirit would alone give birth to so abominable a design. If the hardiness of a few self-deluded men can thus counteract all the beneficent effects that are derived

from the prudence, justice, and gratitude of the many, it becomes a wise government to recollect, that numbers are not the only consideration to be attended to, when measures are to be taken for its safety in the most essential points. If the pernicious position of doing God service, by destroying the enemies of a particular church, can so far prevail over all the dictates of reason, and all the feelings of humanity, we ought not to admit tamely, and without restrictions, the specious distinction, which is commonly made between the tenets of a sect, and the accidental dispositions of the individuals who belong to it. Several persons were surprised into the conspiracy we are speaking of, who in the general tenor of their lives appear to have been neither turbulent in their tempers, nor profligate in their principles. In the unforeseen complication of human affairs, occasions may hereafter arise, when zealots shall approve of vice itself under the semblance of virtue—when the arduous nature, and destructive consequences of their undertaking may endear it to them, as more meritorious—and when the very sincerity and mistaken piety of those who are engaged in it, may render them more deaf to expostulation, more resolutely bent upon mischief, and more fatally hardened against the fear of infamy. Let us bless God for a deliverance, which was not the effect of any worldly wisdom; and let us also show our thankfulness to him, by making a right use of his favours, by reflecting on the causes which produced the threatened disasters of this day, and by forming such a plan of conduct for our-

selves, and all who are entrusted to our care, as may effectually prevent all similar operations of those causes in future.

I shall conclude with some remarks, which, if they lengthen this discourse beyond the usual limits, will not be offensive to you, because they are extremely interesting to us, as members both of a reformed Church, and of a free State. It is not the business of this place to enter into intricate, or invidious discussions, of the motives which may have induced our legislature to have granted some late indulgences to our Catholic fellow-subjects. He is no friend to the peace of society, or to the true honour of religion, who rashly arraigns the conduct of his governors. We, therefore, trust that their tenderness towards the scruples of others, has been founded on principles not only of generosity, but of policy. We hope too, that in their future deliberations, they will pay no slight attention to the interests and credit of our own ecclesiastical constitution, with which indeed our civil rights are closely interwoven. If the opinions and manners of the present age be considered, infidelity perhaps is more immediately to be dreaded than popery. But whether the extremes of both, that is, whether superstition or atheism be most destructive to a state, is a question, which it will be time enough to examine with philosophical exactness when our choice shall be reduced to the one or the other of these dreadful alternatives. Happily this is not yet our case, and therefore we may be contented with thinking that the general prevalence of either would be ex-

tremely pernicious, and with watching not merely against the open advances, but the silent encroachments of both. I will not flatter you with vain promises of security. Under a pretended and an undistinguishing moderation towards the worst forms of religion, some men endeavour to gloss over a lurking indifference towards the best; and others there are who, in the excess of their attachment to their own tenets and ceremonies, entertain very harsh sentiments, and sometimes, I fear, harbour very wicked intentions towards all who differ from them. In one quarter we may think our liberty endangered from the intrigues and pretentions of popery; in another, the true principles of a free and regular government seem to have been misunderstood in no small degree, by some of those sectaries, who have been recently and justly admitted to the plenary and undisturbed enjoyment of all the privileges, which toleration ought to confer; in a third our police is threatened by the gloomy and intolerant spirit of puritanism. When therefore such is our critical situation—when so great a variety of jealous passions, and discordant interests surround us—when they, who dissent from us, are strenuously contending for all their just rights, and a part of them, it may be, aspiring to unjust dominion—when some of them are formidable to us from their fundamental tenets, and others from their increasing numbers and increasing influence, God forbid, that the Established Church should alone slumber in a state of thoughtless security, and shameless inaction. That Church is indebted for

her existence, to the honesty and intrepidity of our first illustrious reformers—for her preservation, to the talents and virtues of their worthy successors—for both, to the gracious and repeated interpositions of Providence. May her zeal therefore never languish into luke-warmness, nor her moderation degenerate into negligence and credulity.

In our several stations we may all of us discharge such duties as will promote the happiness of the community, and the honour of the Gospel. The innocence of the dove is not incompatible with the wisdom of the serpent; for this reason, while we impartially, and even generously admit the claims of other men, we ought to support our own with firmness and alacrity; we ought to proportion our vigilance as well as lenity to the fluctuating exigencies of different seasons; and while we avoid the guilt of laying unnecessary burdens on the consciences of our brethren, we shall do well to resist all exorbitant demands, all wanton innovations, and all daring usurpations. If we abstain from illiberal invectives, and uncharitable constructions—if we sheathe our own sword, when we have repelled that which is lifted up against us; if we venture upon variance with those of our household only to secure and to perpetuate peace with them—if we avoid even the first approaches towards superstition and fanaticism—in a word, if we study the doctrines of Christ faithfully, aud diligently act up to his commands, the safety of our establishment will remain unshaken, and its reputation unsullied. By these means we shall extend the kindly influence of our

religion, and promote the real glory of him who taught it. We shall in the one hand draw the most salutary lesson of moderation and charity from the awful prediction contained in my text; and on the other, by uniting the character of faithful citizens with that of sincere Christians, we shall accomplish the prayers and promises of those blessed spirits, who proclaimed peace on earth, and good-will towards men.

# SERMON XXXI.

TRINITY SUNDAY.*

JOHN iii. 13.

*If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?*

IN order to give you a correct and connected view of the import contained in the words just now read to you, it will be necessary for me to illustrate some circumstances, and to explain some phrases which occur in the chapter of my text. Nicodemus was a *ruler* of the Jews, and the name by which he is designated was, you will observe, never applied to the chief priests, but to the persons who sat in the Sanhedrim, and over whom they presided. He seems not to have been actuated by impertinent curiosity in coming to Christ, or prompted by malicious perfidy; he confessed with apparent sincerity that Christ had done miracles, and he drew from it the just inference, that he came from God. Plain however it is, that he had not subdued many of the prepossessions which, in common with

* 1816.

the other Pharisees, he had early imbibed and diligently cherished; and probable too it is, that fluctuating between hope and fear, checked at one moment by doubt, and impelled at the next by partial conviction, he was solicitous to know by a personal interview, how far the doctrines of Christ, when communicated in close and serious conversation, did or not coincide with the notions which he had previously formed of the Messiah. With these prejudices in the head was blended unhappily a latent and inveterate unsoundness in the heart. His assent to the reality of Christ's miraculous powers, his reverence to the dignity of Christ as a divine teacher, his desire of obtaining from Christ more direct and copious information on the wisdom and properties of his religion, were not sufficient to overcome his habitual fondness for praise, or his habitual dread of censure from his countrymen, and especially from the fierce zealots and shallow bigots with whom he, as a Pharisee, had associated. He was not quite prepared to avow openly what he inwardly believed. He therefore came to Jesus by night, and to this circumstance St. John pointedly adverts in his subsequent account even of his meritorious actions; first, when Nicodemus, though he did not expressly declare himself a disciple of Christ, endeavoured to restrain the violence of the Pharisees, who inveighed against the officers for not having brought Jesus by force before them, and said, doth our law judge any man before it hear him—and afterwards, when he assisted Joseph of Arimathea in the burial of Jesus, and brought a large

mixture of myrrh and aloes to embalm the body. (c. vii. and xix.)

From the method in which the interview was conducted, it is evident that our Lord penetrated into the character of Nicodemus; and if you will yourself bear in mind his infirmities as attended with better qualities, his importance as a ruler in Israel, his peculiar tenets as a conscientious Pharisee, and his recent and unfeigned, though not very deeply rooted faith in Christ, you will more exactly understand why such and such topics were started, and why they were treated in such and such a manner. When Nicodemus had declared, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, Christ immediately puts to the test the nature and the extent of that knowledge in his visitor—"Verily I say unto you, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." In the margin of our Bible we read *from above*, instead of *again*;* and this in truth is always the meaning of the Greek word, as in this chapter (v. 31), "he that cometh from above is above all;" and in the Epistle of St. James, "the wisdom which is from above." Nicodemus indeed misunderstood him, and having taken up the idea of literal carnal birth, with a sort of stifled triumph replied, "How can a man, being old, be born? Can he enter a second time into the womb of his mother, and be born?"

Our Lord resumes his figurative phraseology, but in a varied form, and says, "unless a man be born of the spirit and the water he cannot enter

* ἄνωθεν never has the direct and unmixed sense of *again*.

into the kingdom of God." That this entrance into the religion of Christ should have been the effect of the spirit, you will readily conceive; and you know that our Lord, when separating those who adhered to their faith from those who wavered or apostatized, said, "No man can come unto me except the Father draw him; or except it were given unto him by my Father" (vi. 44, 65). But why does he mention water? Because it was well known to Nicodemus that proselytes were admitted into the Jewish religion by the ceremony of baptism; and Jesus, in conformity to Jewish opinions, and Jewish customs, represents the same ceremony as a concomitant to the spiritual conversion of men to his religion.

By an easy transition of the imagination, the efficacy of water in cleansing the body would be associated with the efficacy of other things which cleanse the soul. Hence, among the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, water was emblematic of moral purity; and though in minds debased by superstition, or heated by fanaticism, the type might be speculatively confounded with the antitype; or, what the history of mankind shows to have been sometimes the case, might be practically substituted for it, yet the type itself had its proper signification and its proper use, nor does any reasonable objection lie against it from occasional misconception, or occasional abuse. Water is among Christians the element employed in baptism; but baptism itself, it is well said, represents to us our profession as the followers of Christ, and tends to suggest to us the duty of having recourse to all moral, and all religious

means, which may assist us in really washing away the contaminations of sin.

After uniting the ideas of water and spirit, our Lord proceeds more at large to correct, if it were possible, the gross and erroneous conceptions of Nicodemus. To be born a second time from earthly parents would not endow a man with greater stores of knowledge, or greater purity of heart — whatsoever is begotten must share the properties of that from which it proceeds — "what is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Finding however that Nicodemus yet marvelled at the declaration, that a man must be born from above, Christ illustrates it by an appeal to the common experience of mankind. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit." He knows from his senses that the wind bloweth; he knows from his consciousness that he has a deeper insight into the truths of religion—a stronger feeling of their importance, a firmer determination to practise them. He does not indeed perceive the immediate influence from which that insight, that feeling, and that determination proceed. The effects, however, he can know by communing with his own heart, and they are of a kind which most assuredly he must ascribe to the agency of the Deity, though he cannot trace the entire process in which that agency was employed to produce that effect. Nicodemus, partly unable to shake off his notion of a second carnal birth, and partly it should seem perplexed by the novelty of

the expression, that a man is to be born of the spirit, inquires, "how can these things be?" As a master of Israel he ought, in some degree, to have known how they could be; as a master of Israel he must have been aware that conversion to the Jewish religion from the Gentile was in their own conception and language often described as a second birth—he was aware also that the Jews metaphorically spoke of themselves as being by birth the children of God—that they in a private and peculiar sense boasted of God as their father; his pride therefore was wounded, and his prejudices shocked by the supposition, that it was necessary for himself or his countrymen the Jews, the chosen people, the favoured children of God, to be born from above, or, as he misunderstood the phrase, to be literally born again, before they could have the benefit of admission into the kingdom of the Messiah.

That he might establish yet more authoritatively the propositions upon which he had insisted, Christ, after gently reproving the want of right apprehension in Nicodemus, goes on to say, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness."

Whether by the change of numbers Christ meant to include the preaching of John and his own disciples, as well as the doctrines which were taught by himself, is not very material. If the allusion was to John and to the Apostles and other followers of Christ, they were convinced by their own experience that their faith was from above, that they spoke what they really knew, and testified what they had

really seen. If it be confined to Christ, he that came down from the Father certainly had the purest and fullest views of every fact which he asserted, of every duty which he enforced, of every tenet which he promulgated, and of every purpose which he proclaimed to mankind as employed by their moral governor for their moral improvement; and yet his instructions, though accompanied by the evidence of works to which the unaided powers of human nature must have been unequal, had been perversely disputed, or contumeliously rejected. If Christ had insisted only on such truths as were not at variance with the prepossessions of the Jewish by-standers, his testimony might have been received; if he advanced no proposition which jarred with the spiritual pride, or interfered with the usurped authority of the Pharisees, Nicodemus might have been emboldened to profess himself a disciple of the Teacher who had done such mighty works.

Having then (in v. 11) assumed the authority with which he was invested as a teacher come from God, and laid his claim to unsullied veracity in every statement, and to unerring wisdom in every doctrine, he points out the improbability of producing conviction upon greater matters, when his endeavours to convince upon the less had been thus unsuccessful—"If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? The same absence of impartial and fixed attention—the same disposition to measure every tenet offered to your consideration by your own scanty views, or crooked prepossessions—the same unwillingness to ex-

amine the grounds upon which, as a master of Israel, you have erected your pretensions to superior sagacity and superior sanctity—these very same causes which prevent you from believing what is more familiar to your memories, and more obvious to your understandings, will have betrayed you into more incurable and more criminal incredulity, when your teacher expatiates upon a subject of far greater difficulty, and far higher moment.

At the outset of this discourse, as you remember, I told you it would be requisite for me to elucidate the phraseology of St. John, and here you have a direct instance. For it might be asked, in what consists the difference between things earthly and things heavenly, to which Christ adverts? Is it the distinction between things temporal and eternal—between things that relate to earth only, and things which entirely and solely belong to Heaven? The question deserves to be answered seriously; and I shall endeavour to furnish you with such a solution as may be intelligible, satisfactory, and useful. You will observe then, the things earthly and the things heavenly were both of them spiritual, though different in kind, and disparate in importance. The things earthly were things done upon earth, and easy to be known when done, and of this sort was that birth from above, or that birth of the spirit upon which Jesus had been conversing. Now if, in consequence of his entrance into the kingdom of heaven, that is, his conversion from Judaism, or Gentilism, to the Gospel, a man had acquired one virtuous, or conquered one vicious habit—if, having taken Jesus

for his guide, he found his faith more and more firm, his hope more lively, his piety more ardent, his charity more comprehensive, these earthly events might always become subjects of contemplation; they were in themselves instances of personal experience, and upon reflection they must have been ascribed to the operation of causes, which utimately are to be resolved into the agency of God. On the other hand, heavenly things, as I shall endeavour presently to show from the sequel of Christ's discourse, imply the counsels and dispensations of Almighty God in the gracious and wonderful redemption of mankind. But in order to prepare you for a more distinct conception of the interpretation just now given to heavenly things, as discriminated from things earthly, I must, on the principle of associated ideas, previously lay open the peculiar propriety, and I add, the peculiar grandeur of the word *heavenly*, which in my opinion was here selected by Christ, and which is clearly illustrated by some corresponding phrases in the context.

In the verse that immediately follows the text, we read, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in heaven;" and in the next it is said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Now it has been observed by several learned men, that the word translated *and*, does not carry on the reasoning; and it has been added, that there is no apparent connection between the text and the two verses just recited, nor between the two verses them-

selves. To the first observation I assent, for *and*, as a solitary term, does not connect the sense of the verses; but in the second remark I do not acquiesce. Though in Hebrew the connective particle is possibly in two or three places causal, and in two or three others illative, yet I have never met in sacred or profane writers, any passage which justifies the opinion of Schmidius, and some other critics, that in St. John we ought to render the Greek word *for*. But if, according to the conjecture proposed by Markland, we repeat the words, *he said*, then the proposition will be intelligible, though independently considered; and when the grammatical difficulty is thus removed, we perhaps may find our way to some principle for showing that these two verses are in their sense really connected with the doctrine of our Lord upon things heavenly, though the connection may not on the first transient glimpse present itself even to readers neither dull nor unlearned.

But my first concern, as I stated to you, is with the choice of the expression, *heavenly*. In the admirable preface of Brandan Ladolphus Raphelius to the learned and philological notes of his father on the New Testament, he very copiously and luminously interprets the phrase, "No man has ascended into heaven but the Son of Man, who was in heaven." He has at full length pointed out the chain of our Lord's reasoning; he understands *earthly* things to mean, as do other learned and pious men, that regeneration by the spirit, which Nicodemus was unwilling to believe, and he supports

this part of his opinion by two pertinent quotations from Origen and Ammonius. Literally to ascend to heaven cannot be applied to Christ, for his ascension had not taken place; figuratively it means the investigation of hidden things, and for such investigation Christ, who came down from heaven, was in a peculiar and pre-eminent degree qualified. Now in Deuteronomy, (iii. 3,) "This commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off; it is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, who will go up for us to heaven and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it." Alluding to this passage, St. Paul (Rom. x.) says, "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, say not in thine heart who shall ascend into heaven, that is, to bring down Christ from above; or who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead; but what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach." His meaning is, the Gospel justification is not so hidden, that we must draw it down from heaven, or raise it from the abyss; for this were the same as if a man should literally endeavour to bring Christ down again from heaven; it would imply that, having come down from heaven before, he had not in his Gospel sufficiently explained to us the principle of justification, and also other heavenly things necessary to be known for our salvation. So in Proverbs (xxx), "Who has ascended into heaven or descended; who hath gathered the winds into his fist? What is his name? And what is the name of

his son?" that is, man by his natural strength can no more discover these things, which the Son of God descending from above has revealed, than he can gather the winds. Who hath gone into Heaven, says Bacon, and taken wisdom, and brought her down from the clouds? So in Maimonides—he who turns his thoughts to low things, is said *exed*, to descend; he that contemplates excellent things is said *ohe*, to ascend. Now in the time of Christ, the Jewish doctors used the Greek version as well as the original Hebrew, and the sense of the phrase, in either, could not be unknown to Nicodemus.

If it be critically objected, that in one part of the sentence, "ascended into Heaven," is a figurative expression, and "who was in Heaven," or, as some MSS. read, who is from Heaven, is literal, my answer is, that such formulæ occur in the most approved writers of antiquity, and that examples may be found in the Holy Scriptures. "If I be lifted up," says Christ, that is, literally on the cross, "I will draw all men to me," that is, figuratively, I will draw them to the thoughts of my crucifixion, and the belief of my doctrines. Again, when Jesus found James and John at the literal draught of fishes, he, in allusion to it, says, figuratively, "Simon, fear not, henceforth thou shalt catch men;" and here unfortunately the English version feebly and imperfectly conveys the import of the original—ye have been catching fish to destroy them; henceforth ye shall catch men to save them alive. Christ then, who literally had been in Heaven, is metaphorically said to have ascended

thither, because, being in the bosom of his father, he had the fullness of knowledge in heavenly things.

Thus far then we see how pertinent and emphatical was the language used by our Lord. Let us now trace the connection between what is said on heavenly things, and the ascent of Christ into Heaven, and the lifting up of the Son of Man. Our Lord was not content with stating that Nicodemus would not believe, if he told unto him heavenly things; he points out his peculiar knowledge of these things in the strongest terms—no man hath so understood those heavenly things as the Son of Man, who came down from Heaven to reveal them. You see now the connection between the declaration about heavenly things, in verse 12, and the assertion in verse 13, that they were known to Christ; and you will particularly call to mind, what I lately told you, that, Son of Man, the man who is Christ, here and elsewhere applies to himself, and which, as Lightfoot well remarks, designates some excellent person, highly distinguished above others. From hence, the Psalmist, after saying, what is the Son of Man that thou visitest him—immediately subjoins, thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Having thus unfolded to you shortly the similarity of diction, and close relation of thought between the 12th and 13th verses, I shall now endeavour to convince you that the 14th, which Schmid calls independent even of the 13th, is in reality connected with both that, and with the preceding.

Having generally asserted that the Jews would not believe him, when he spoke of heavenly things, and generally declared, that he, who was in Heaven, had therefore contemplated and known them, he selects a particular and most striking instance of that which the Jews would not admit, and which he himself knew and came to reveal. And mark, I beseech you, the manner in which he thus manifested his own supernatural wisdom; he does not throw an air of dazzling sublimity or mystical solemnity over his religion—he does not adopt the artificial and obscure representations, and often unintelligible language, which upon abstruse subjects is often employed by the subtilty of sophists, and the rashness of dogmatists—he does not astound Nicodemus by any ostentatious harangue upon essence, substance, and inherent and incommunicable properties of the divine nature, which baffle every effort of the human intellect to grapple, and for which human language never did nor ever will supply appropriate and adequate expression—such as would satisfy the sceptic, enlighten the sage, or edify the worshipper. No—he lays before Nicodemus two of the purposes which God had in view for the salvation of his creatures, which reason unaided never could have traced out—purposes which, till they were revealed, might, in the true scriptural sense of the word, be called mysteries—purposes, which having been revealed, instead of being mysterious to the human mind, became at once level to our apprehensions, credible to our reason, and interesting to the purest and most sacred feelings of our hearts. I will tell you what

they were. Nicodemus, in common with the other Pharisees, looked for the temporal advantages of the Messiah's reign; and their fancies had arrayed him in all the exterior pomp of worldly majesty. But what says Christ? As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. Was not the doctrine of a crucified Redeemer one of the heavenly things, which Nicodemus and his countrymen were most unlikely to receive? Was it not a doctrine, the knowledge and communication of which was reserved for that blessed being who came down from Heaven? But further, Nicodemus and the Jews confined to themselves exclusively the benefits which the Messiah was to confer. But what says Christ? The Son of Man must be lifted up—for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life; and this clause strictly belongs only to the proposition now recited to you, and is justly considered as an interpolation in the preceding verse, where it even interrupts the progress of our Lord's reasoning, and if suffered to continue would burthen the whole matter by useless and even senseless repetition. Now, for God so to love the world, that all men who believed in his Son should be eternally happy—is it not a heavenly thing? is it not a purpose worthy of being known to the Son of God who had ascended into Heaven? is it not a truth substantially and palpably of that very kind which the Pharisees, and Nicodemus himself, so far as he was under the influence of Pharasaical prejudice, would have been most eager to oppose?

The topics proposed by our Lord are not the less instructive, when considered as experimental, and adapted to the just view, which he had taken in respect to the peculiar situation and real disposition of Nicodemus. When the Master of Israel had given himself ample credit for readiness to admit that Christ was a teacher sent from God, because he had done that which God alone could especially enable man to do, our Lord suggests a necessary qualification for entrance into the Messiah's kingdom, and such a qualification as had not previously occurred to the mind of Nicodemus, nor was quite agreeable, or indeed quite intelligible to him, from the cloud which prejudice had thrown over his understanding, after it had been stated by Christ. Then, with consummate skill, and yet with apparent ease, he introduces two other points, which may be considered as fundamental, in order to make a yet farther trial of the result on the wavering, but not altogether corrupt, disposition of his hearer. Mark, then, I beseech you, not only the harmony that pervades the various parts of our Lord's discourse, but the gradation of it from a general position to particulars, and from one weighty particular to another yet more weighty. That a Jew, belonging to the favourite people of God, should not be capable of admission into the Christian covenant, unless he had been born from above and of the Spirit, was incredible to Nicodemus—that heavenly things were to be revealed by the Son of Man, and among them, that the Messiah, under whose auspices they expected the restoration of

their ancient polity, and an increase of secular wealth and power, should be put to an ignominious death, and perish by the hands of the Jewish nation, to whom he made the first offer of favours from the deity, was alike perplexing to the judgment and offensive to the pride of the Pharisee—that the religion taught by the same Messiah should equally hold out the protection and blessing of God to the Gentile and the Jew, was yet more perplexing, and yet more offensive.

My hearers, what a wonderful example of penetration and condescension does our blessed Instructor thus set before us! how tenderly does he reprove the errors of Nicodemus, while he effectually refutes them! In revealing what we are most concerned to hear, and were of ourselves quite unable to discover, how happily does he unite argument with statement, simplicity with dignity, and the impressive with the awful! How much does that wisdom which is from above surpass all the ingenuity of human reasoning, and all the splendour of human eloquence! Who does not wish to be actuated by the heavenly spirit of docility and gratitude, when such heavenly truths, in such a heavenly manner, are communicated to him by our heavenly Teacher?

Humbly, my hearers, and yet earnestly, do I hope to have been not wholly unsuccessful in this well-meant effort to bring before you the real and complete meaning of a text, which seems to me of more than ordinary importance, and which is certainly accompanied by difficulties, for the solution

of which are required the most steady attention and the most reverential wariness. In conformity to what I said at the beginning of my discourse, I have explained to you some peculiar circumstances in the character of Nicodemus—I have analyzed some singular properties in the language of our Redeemer—I have supported my criticism by the authority of serious believers and distinguished scholars; and I trust that you see connection which unites all the various parts of our Lord's conversation, and the infinite value of the close, in which you are told that for your sake he was lifted upon the cross, and in love to you God sent his Son into the world, that whoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. These heavenly truths you will receive more readily, more gratefully, than did the Pharisees; you will avow your belief in them more boldly than did Nicodemus; and may God in his mercy grant that such your belief may lead you to correspondent holiness of life.

When illustrating the first part of my text, I took occasion to remark, that, among many other earthly things not understood, or not received by Nicodemus, our Lord adverted to spiritual birth, and that he called it so, because that birth was accomplished upon earth, that is, because matter of direct personal experience; and though actually revealed by Christ, yet does not stand in the same high order with other communications, to which he assigned the name of heavenly. Now the rapid progress of fanaticism—the uncouth jargon of certain

teachers upon illumination and the new birth—the strange interpretations which they confidently disseminate on the phraseology of the Gospel—and the tendency of their doctrines, not only to decoy men into the most irrational and unscriptural opinions, but to excite them to most unseemly habits of spiritual pride and uncharitable censoriousness, cannot fail to alarm every enlightened believer in every Christian Church, and more especially the well-informed and judicious pastors of our own venerable Establishment. I have therefore determined, on the two following Sundays, to read in this sanctuary what I think a most excellent discourse on Experience. It was written by a Divine of great and just celebrity. I trust, therefore, that the soundness of his doctrine, the liveliness of his descriptions, the cogency of his reasoning, the seriousness of his warnings, and the fervour of his piety, will amply justify my choice. Indeed, he will be found at once ingenious without refinement, and popular without enthusiastic rant and frivolous common place. But in order to prepare for the topics which he has discussed with more than ordinary ability, I think it right to introduce here some particular matter on *regeneration*, a word which illiterate and indiscreet teachers have, you know, frequently and triumphantly misemployed in deluding the credulous, terrifying the lowly, and emboldening the presumptuous.

The word regeneration occurs in the profane writers of antiquity, and bears, you must remember, not a moral but a physical signification. The Stoics

eld that,on the completion of their great year, which included one hundred thousand annual revolutions of the heavenly bodies, the universe would be restored to its former state, and a new course of the same things, animate and inanimate, would commence, with the same destined duration. Certain calculators maintained that, in the space of four hundred and forty years, the same men should be born again, not by any transmigration of souls, as the Pythagoreans taught, but with the same bodies and the same souls. Cicero speaks of the triumph to which he was summoned by his friends on that return from exile, which he styles a second birth. Galen tells us of a medicine which procured for those who were at the point of death, that speedy and perfect recovery which he considered as a second coming to life. "Oh! immortal Gods!" says Hegio, in the Captives of Plautus, on receiving some good advice, "I seem to be born again, if you speak true." It is used nearly in the same manner by Philo and Josephus. "Noah and his family," says the former, "not only were themselves rescued from the greatest dangers, but were the leaders also of a second birth to their posterity, and the persons in whom began a second period of existence." "The Jews," says the latter, "on their return from the Babylonian activity, celebrated by a feast this recovery of their state, and second birth of their country."

In the foregoing passages, the term means, literally, either a second existence, or such a signal improvement in the condition as resembled it. In

the Old Testament we do not meet with the compound word, but the parts of which it is compounded are in the Septuagint version of Job xiv. 14. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come," says our version. "All the days of this my pilgrimage I am looking when my change shall come," Tindal renders the words. All the Greek translators, Symmachus, Aquila, Theodotion, and the Seventy, understood the words to mean a change from one state of being to another; and such, too, is the fixed judgment of the learned Schultens.

Now I must entreat you to remark, that, whether it be used in a primary or a secondary, a literal or a figurative sense, by the writers just now mentioned, it means a physical state of things, and supplies us with little or no light in adjusting the signification, when it is employed, as in the Scriptures it once certainly is, in a *moral* sense. Twice only do we meet with it in the New Testament, and I shall examine both the texts. In Matthew xix. 18, we read, "Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the *regeneration*, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Here the sense must depend on the punctuation. Our translators join the word to, ye which have followed me, and then regeneration must signify, as Hammond and Fischer suppose, the amendment of the souls both of Jews and Gentiles to be effected by the aid of the Gospel; and doubtless in furnishing that aid

the disciples co-operated with their master. But the context has led many judicious critics to unite the term with the close of the sentence, and their explanation seems to me the most probable—at the second birth, at the rising of the dead to a second life, when the Son of Man comes in his glory, ye shall sit on twelve thrones. In this view of the passage its import is literal; but, if we grant it to be figurative, yet the regeneration mentioned by Christ has no resemblance to the sudden, final, miraculous change, which modern fanatics arrogate to themselves and the elect. It means only that general but salutary change which the preaching of the Gospel would accomplish in the Christian world, and had already wrought in those who, having been born of the spirit, and having surrendered their former prejudices to faith, expiated their former sins by that repentance which John, the precursor of Christ, had so earnestly recommended as a preparatory qualification for entrance into the kingdom of God.

Once more only is the word found in the sacred writers, and there it is obviously metaphorical. After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour, says St. Paul, in the Epistle to Titus, towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of *regeneration* and renewing of the holy spirit. (iii. 4.) Here regeneration is coupled with renewal, and renewal is a phrase which occurs much oftener, though it has not the same charms with regeneration to the fancy of our evangelical

preachers. So great was the change of the moral character, when a Jew or Greek became a believer, that with propriety the sacred writers say—be renewed in the spirit of your mind—the new man, which is renewed in knowledge—be transformed by the renewing of your mind—it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance—though our outward man perish, yet the inward is renewed day by day. Now you will take notice that renewal is found only in the Epistles of Paul, and in that to the Hebrews; and you must here take notice that even in St. Paul no instantaneous renewal is mentioned, and that he once tells us, of a progressive renewal, very different from that state of spiritual perfection and spiritual security, upon which some modern fanatics expatiate. You will take notice that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews supposes it possible for those who have been renewed, to fall away, and scarcely possible for them, after they have apostatized from faith and obedience, to be a second time renewed to repentance. Finally, you will take notice, that even the word renewal was once and once only coupled by St. Paul with regeneration, and was not employed by Christ himself.

Now as to the term regeneration, its sense in the Scripture is once indisputably figurative; it is moral; it implies more or less escape from sin, and more or less progress in righteousness; it very aptly denotes that important change which was experienced when they passed from the Jewish or the Gentile forms of

religion to the pure and perfect religion of Christ. It is applied, and note this well, to converts, and to them only.

But can it with no propriety be ever applied to believers in our own days? Yes, as a high rhetorical phrase it may be so used, if care be taken to show men, that such regeneration is very different from that which is ascribed by the sacred writers to the converts of their times. The transition in their days was in general from idolatry to the belief and worship of one God, and from the most scandalous immoralities to a more holy system of action. The transition, as a Jew, was from a ritual to a spiritual religion, and from an imperfect code of ethics to one far more perfect in principle and far more arduous in practice. The transition in a Christian may be, but often is not, from erroneous opinions to others better founded, and from vicious habits to virtuous. But who shall say that the transition from error to truth, and from vice to virtue is peculiarly and exclusively the property of any one sect or any one Church? Well, it may be asked, does not the Church of England speak of regeneration from original sin? Be it so, but it describes that regeneration as effected at the time of baptism; and baptism itself is chiefly a mean to prepare us for that Christian knowledge, which is afterwards to lead to a Christian life. If we look back to that second birth, which is mentioned in Scripture, we shall find that it does not resemble those experiences, which in our own times are said both to constitute and to mark regeneration. Was it not the work of the

spirit? Yes, but with the concurrence, and I add, the conscious concurrence of the man; and even the extraordinary gifts of the spirit were bestowed only upon those who had previously been converted by ordinary means. Doubtless, in the regeneration of converts, the spirit of God acted both upon the understanding and the will. Truths the most interesting were presented to the one, motives the most powerful were set before the other, and if we extol the efficacy of miracles to produce belief, even now the spirit of God worketh in us to will and to do nearly in the same way, and for the same purpose of our salvation. We cannot trace all the gradations by which moral causes produce their effects, but the effects may be known by self-examination upon our progress in religious knowledge and religious habits. And as to the causes, be they more or less remote, more or less numerous, we are certain that they derive their existence and their efficacy from God—that they are graciously appointed by him as means for our instruction here, and our happiness hereafter—that they substantially are tokens of his favours, and instances of his aid, and as such are reasonable and additional grounds for steadiness in our faith, and activity in our obedience.

Marvel not, my brethren, that under the all-seeing eye and all-controlling hand of the deity, all earthly things, whether animate or inanimate, visible or invisible, may assist in producing the birth of the spirit, which constitutes the Christian character. Education, popular traditions, national example, customs, government parental and civil—science, learning, in

their several branches—the external rites, precepts, and doctrines of religion, the exhortations of spiritual pastors, the advice of virtuous friends, the encouragements of praise, the restraints of blame, the joys of prosperity, the chastisements of adversity, the works of art, the scenery of nature, the peculiar properties of every revolving season, every tree which beareth fruit in the fields, every star which shineth in the firmament, every condition in society, every incident in life — every one of these things, seen or done upon earth, may be nearly or remotely connected with our ultimate interest in heaven — may with more or less efficacy be the instruments of our moral discipline, and to our senses or our understandings may present objects which operate upon our wills, and excite us to effusions of piety or deeds of virtue. God is above them all manifestly; God is in them all; God intends them all for the use of his rational, responsible, redeemed creatures; and consequently, according to the Scriptural import of the term Grace, as well as upon metaphysical principles of theism, even those things which at first view are earthly, yet in reality are tokens of his favour; they are instances of his aid; they form a part of his dispensations as our moral Governor, and severally or collectively they must appear to men of reflection to furnish additional grounds for steadfastness in our faith, ardour in our gratitude, and activity in our obedience.

# SERMON XXXII.*

ON THE LOVE OF WORLDLY PRAISE.

COLOSSIANS iii. 23.

*Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men.*

ST. PAUL originally addressed this exhortation, in an Epistle written some time about the year 62, to converts, the slaves of heathen masters, who resided at Colossæ, the metropolis of Phrygia. Probable it is, that comparing the reasonableness and purity of the doctrines in which they had recently been instructed with the absurd tenets and superstititious worship of their employers, they became secretly inclined to throw off the yoke of servitude, or to withdraw some portion at least of their wonted obedience. The Apostle, therefore, instructs them to distinguish between their social and their religious relations. The liberty which they had lately acquired under the Gospel was freedom from the tyranny of sinful habits, and the bondage of the Jewish ritual—not exemption from those good offices, which, by the customs and institutions of their country, were due to their domestic superiors. On the contrary, the law of God now called upon them more strongly to do that which, by the

* July 1817.

law of man, had been previously required to be done. As believers in Jesus, they were under the strictest obligations to be more respectful to the persons, and more faithful to the interests, of their masters than were other slaves hitherto unconverted. While the heathen male domestic looked to the eye of his master, and the heathen maiden to the eye of her mistress with feigned smiles and stifled moans —while day after day, and year after year they toiled from compulsion rather than choice—while their general aim was to escape the gloomy dungeon, the galling fetter, and the uplifted scourge, and their occasional lot to receive a scanty and precarious pittance of praise; the Christian slave was bound to execute the work assigned to him heartily, and to consider himself as serving under the view, and as responsible to the authority of a far mightier Master.

Now without offensive violence to language, and upon the clearest grounds of analogy, the words of the text will admit a wider application. In truth, the principle contained in them related to every station in society, whether high or low—to every degree of intellect, whether more or less cultivated—to every moral agent who, as such, oweth homage to his Maker and Preserver; and therefore the import of the words of the text thus extended, may be stated in a paraphrase similar to the following.

It is the distinguishing characteristic of your religion, that it enjoins not only the external performance of our duty, but that inward rectitude of intention which invigorates every motive, and dignifies

every action. In order to be Christians, you must not rest satisfied with appearing to be devout, or just, or charitable; you must join in the public worship of the Supreme Being, not to impress others with an exalted idea of your piety, but to thank Almighty God for his mercies, to implore his forgiveness, and to obtain his protection—you must be inflexibly upright in your dealings, not merely because the laws of your country will punish secret fraud and outrageous rapine, or because ignominy overtakes those misdeeds of which the magistrate cannot take cognizance, but because he whose eyes are too pure to behold iniquity will ultimately destroy the unjust and reward the just. In the same manner must you give your bread to the poor, and comfort the afflicted; not solely that your characters may stand fair with the world, but in compliance with the dictates of that sympathy which is interwoven in your very nature, and by which the Almighty has taught your hearts to melt on viewing the distresses of your fellow-creatures. In familiar or grave conversation upon literature, science, and even the ordinary events of life—amidst the bustle of secular business, the gaiety of convivial intercourse, and other social enjoyments, which exhilirate the mind without corrupting it—you must not make a show of superior sanctity by expatiating upon the awful subjects of religion, and exclaiming with a pharisaical air of singularity and solemnity, "Lord, Lord;" but when you retire into the closet, or kneel in the sanctuary, reverently should you meditate upon the works, and the Word

of God, and in every transaction, secret or open, which is really connected with duty, diligently should you strive to adapt your resolutions and measures to his holy will—you must not shrink from any difficulty however stubborn, or any peril however formidable in the service of your Creator. Whatsoever indeed you do must be done heartily, and being thus done will be acceptable and praiseworthy not only in the sight of men, who may sometimes overlook and sometimes depreciate it, but in the sight of God, who hath wisdom to discern, and goodness to recompense it, according to its actual and inherent merit.

So plain, yet so important is the lesson which you are taught by the Holy Scriptures in general, as well as by the passage which we are now considering; for surely if the slave was to act towards his earthly master, not as looking to men, but unto the Lord, by parity of reasoning you, through the whole extent of your obedience to your Heavenly Master, must perform his will directly and steadily, for the purpose of deserving his favour. On the practice of that lesson, all that is efficient in faith, and all that is laudable in morality, must depend; for unless you act heartily as conscious of being seen by the Deity, and desirous of being approved by him, your conduct, even as it regards men, will often be debased by inconsistency, and often contaminated by guilt.

The text, you see, forbids you to act as appealing to the judgments of men, exclusively, and even chiefly; it directs you to act with that firmness, and

that zeal, which are the happy effects of our deep conviction, that in the practice of every virtue, and the avoidance of every vice, our aim is to perform the service which is due to our Master who is in heaven.

Keeping therefore in view what the Apostle interdicts and what he enjoins, I shall first consider the love of worldly praise as it constitutes an exclusive principle of action; secondly, I shall endeavour to show, that by weakening those motives which ought to be most powerful, and strengthening those which ought to be subordinate, it eventually obstructs the discharge of many noble duties. When these two points have been discussed, we can with greater propriety attend to the exact degree of influence which a regard to the opinion of the world may justifiably and even meritoriously have on our behaviour. I shall in the conclusion, both in this and a subsequent discourse, introduce such practical remarks as may be suggested by the various topics which come before us.

Now in the concerns of religion there may be often seen an earnestness and a perseverance which certainly do not coincide with St. Paul's injunction for us to act *heartily*. That earnestness, indeed, should be called precipitation, and that perseverance, obstinacy, when the object we have in view is not to fulfil the commands of God, but to gratify some wayward and inordinate passion of our own. Of this kind was the eagerness which, as we read in the Epistle to the Galatians, some opponents of St. Paul manifested in contending for the absolute and

indispensible necessity of circumcision. Their opposition arose at once from abject cowardice and lurking pride. They constrained their brethren to be circumcised, only lest they should themselves suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. They urged other men to observe this rite, not for any unfeigned reverence for the honour of the Jewish Lawgiver who had imposed it, but in order that they might have an opportunity of glorying in the flesh of their Jewish contemporaries. They exulted in the triumphs of their own artifices over the credulous, and their own menaces over the timid. They exulted in the success of their resistance to the efforts of an Apostle, who in his preaching insisted upon the faith of a crucified Master, and who by his example was anxious to prepare his followers for undergoing the most frightful rigours of persecution. Thus in the counsels and measures of these turbulent zealots, vanity was blended with fraud, and the malignity of intolerance lent its aid to the arrogance of dogmatism. Well it were, if in the history of the Christian Church, there were no instances of similar offences. Well it were, if in our own age the dread of reproach or the desire of fame were never permitted to betray us into the guilt of exercising dominion over the consciences of our fellow-creatures, and of calumniating their characters, and encroaching upon their rights, because they will not comply with this or that ceremony in outward worship, or will not assent to this or that interpretation of Holy Writ. We may plan solicitously, we may act strenuously, we may applaud

and invite others to applaud our orthodoxy in faith, our punctuality in devotion, our unremitted vigilance against the encroachments of heresy, and our invincible fortitude against the assaults of schism; but that which may be thus done, may often not be done heartily, as St. Paul employed the word, and possible it is, that now and then our secret and chief meaning may be to support the fleeting opinions of the day in ethics, politics, or theology—to attract the notice of popular economists—to pamper the vanity of powerful patrons—to gain the unmerited praise of the sanctimonious fanatic and the haughty bigot—or to propitiate their equally unmerited wrath —rather than to promote the glory of God.

If from abuses in religion we turn towards secular affairs, many are the occasions upon which the love of praise is injurious to mankind. The warrior who scatters desolation over the earth, and wades through the blood of his fellow-creatures in search of that empty phantom which is called glory— the politician, who designing to catch the momentary plaudits of the giddy and unthinking multitude, sacrifices the nobler interests of his country, and the happiness of millions yet unborn. These, my brethren, are awful examples of what the passion I am considering can effect, when to the insatiable desires of the ambitious man are superadded the solications of opportunity and the licentiousness of power. History, I grant, enables us at last to form a just estimate of characters once arrayed in all the dazzling colours of popularity at home, and celebrity abroad. It developes the real motives of agents,

and the real consequences of action. It teaches us to distinguish those who act heartily, from those who are specious without wisdom, or zealous without sincerity. Yet there is often the lapse of years and even centuries ere we can entirely be rescued from errors, protected both by length of time and wideness of circulation. In the mean while human opinions are led astray, and human language is incautiously, or craftily, or insidiously accommodated to the prejudices of education, to the clamours of party, and the servility of courts. Hence the licensed murderer is called a hero—the factious demagogue is a patriot—the declamatory hireling is an orator—the oppressor is the guardian of social order—the despot is a champion of legitimate authority. Yet these personages are, it must be confessed, wise in their generation; and, acting as unto men, they for a time are by men admired, while they stand condemned in the sight of God. Be it however observed, that by some of those sudden and strange occurrences which human sagacity cannot foresee, nor human contrivance avert, the candidates for renown are sometimes disappointed. Blind from infatuation, precipitate from passion, negligent from confidence in the long-tried favour of fortune, they, in some luckless moment, make a false step, and what is the effect? Their fall is more precipitate and not less conspicuous than their elevation. You know, my hearers, that from the fickleness and infirmity of the human mind, they who are most prone to be captivated by the success of bold adventurers in the career of fame, are most likely to be

alienated by their discomfiture. The present generation is then ready to perform the task which is often reserved for posterity. They suddenly reverse the sentence which they had once passed upon the supposed merits of the distinguished men whom they had been accustomed to idolize. Taking alarm at the unexpected discovery of their mistakes, they look to the real properties of things and persons, and wishing to expiate their excessive and unjust partialities, they no longer concede the merits of the race to the swift, or the glory of the battle to the strong. Hence the sophist, who had abused his talents in giving to the worse cause the appearance of the better, is at last despised alike by the intelligent and the illiterate. The hero, the incendiary, and the tyrant are detested by the virtuous and resisted by the brave. Having acted as unto men, they by men are finally understood, and therefore reprobated; not having acted as unto their God, they are by that God deservedly given up to ignominy and perdition.

But if we would improve so far as lies in us, the reflections which the text may suggest to us upon the uncertainty of human praise, and the danger of an excessive regard for it, let us bring the subject home to our own business and bosoms—let us direct our thoughts to circumstances in which the greater part of mankind are placed, and in which we may ourselves be tempted to act, not unto the Lord, but unto men. Look then around you upon what is passing every day; for you will thus be taught not to value others more highly than they ought to be valued, and

at the same time to beware, lest, thinking yourselves so stand firmly, you, on that very account, are in the hour of trial, more likely to fall. Even in the retired scenes of life many are the evils arising from the neglect of the precept virtually inculcated in the text—evils which not only disgrace the offender, but deeply injure those fellow-creatures, whose dearest rights and weightiest interests are affected by his malignant agency. Do we not see men of humbler fortune actuated by the same ambition of popularity which operates so visibly and so permanently on the minds of their superiors, when the thirst of wordly praise is become, as it were, our ruling passion? With whatever class a man may associate, his words and his deeds are made to coincide with the peculiar habits and darling tenets of his companions. Resigning every honest claim to liberty of thinking, he will echo and re-echo every opinion however irrational, and every assertion however groundless. That faculty of speech by which the Almighty has distinguished him from all other animals, and raised him above them, is so employed as to degrade him below them—employed in disguising those feelings of which it was ordained to be the faithful expositor—employed in the meanest concessions of servility, and the grossest exaggerations of flattery—employed in aspersing the reputation of the innocent, in satiating the malice of the guilty, and in conciliating the smiles of the vicious, by extenuating and even justifying their blackest crimes. Great indeed should be our caution, lest we should be led to give our esteem or

confidence to those who, with the fairest appearances, are accustomed to act not unto the Lord, but unto men. He that devours widows' houses may from artifice, or pride, as well as compunction, be induced to build a sanctuary. He that betrays his trust towards a helpless orphan, may endow an hospital. He that is welcomed with shouts for his plausible harangues, or profuse donations in behalf of some public institution, may yet be a contentious neighbour, an imperious master, an unfaithful husband, or an unfeeling father.

But further. In the pursuit of worldly praise, men are neither ashamed nor afraid of going into the most opposite extremes. View the vain-glorious man in the society of the wise and good, with what effort does he assume the semblance of those qualifications, which he values only as the present means of acquiring esteem—with what anxiety does he torture his invention for those virtuous sentiments to which his heart is secretly a stranger—with what ostentation will he sometimes display even actions, which in the judgment of God derive their intrinsic and sole merit from the sincerity of our motives. Let us however pass with the same man into other scenes, where the wise are no longer to be deluded, and the good are no longer to be conciliated. There we shall behold this advocate of innocence, this panegyrist of virtue, this admirer of every intellectual and moral excellence, changed in a moment. We shall behold him rioting in the gross intemperance of a tavern, or wallowing in the impure excesses of a brothel. Amidst all this

diversity, or I should rather say apparent contrariety in the means to which he has recourse, he has the inward consciousness of pursuing the same end. Whether he speaks truth or falsehood—whether he extols virtue or palliates vice, it is not necessary for him to believe what he utters. Sufficient it is for such a skilful and systematic deceiver, that in the real or pretended faith of other men—in their right or wrong notions of duty—in their sympathetic vanity or sympathetic profligacy, he can meet with ready and fit instruments for the accomplishment of his own designs, and it is in either their better or their worse qualities he discovers what, under different circumstances, he may employ to equal advantage. When you behold a man in whom the love of praise in various situations produces such various effects, impossible it is for you not to be at once disgusted at his glaring inconsistency, and shocked at his complicated guilt. Yet to the picture which I have just been drawing, it may be objected that the colouring is too strong. Were such a man to exist, I might be told, his detection would be certain. The most consummate art is insufficient to support such a complicated and discordant system of wily hypocrisy and unblushing licentiousness. Such a deceiver would be spurned alike by the virtuous and the vicious—by the virtuous, because he had degraded the dignity of their cause, and applied to the worst purposes appearances which, if accompanied by realities, would have facilitated the very best—by the vicious, because having once excited their admiration as the declared enemy of decorum, tem-

perance, and moral rectitude, he had shrunk from danger, and abandoned his associates in guilt, more consistent and more bold than himself. If then such characters are very rare, little, you may say, is it to be dreaded from their example; and why should the Christian instructor point his indignation against offences which are but ideal, if measured by his description of them, or which, if they ever do occur, cannot long escape detection?

Now to objections of this kind I should calmly oppose the testimony of experience. Is there any impartial and serious observer, who has not met with characters very strongly resembling and very nearly approaching that which I have described to you? What security can we have, that he who to-day assumes by effort the appearance of virtue, may not to-morrow venture upon the appearance and the reality too of vice? If the applause of mankind be adopted as his favourite principle, what bounds shall be prescribed to the operation of such a motive? If for the purpose of gratifying vanity he sometimes will practise virtue, why should he abstain from vice, when the same vanity urges him to rush into it? Virtue also, be it remembered, requires great exertions of self-command and self-denial; but vice is surrounded by numberless allurements, and in yielding to them, he by one process secures for himself more than one gratification; for he indulges not only his habitual pride, but his carnal appetites and his selfish affections. Hence they who are acquainted with the weakness and deceitfulness of the human heart, will not be surprised

at any flagrant excesses or any seeming inconsistencies into which that offender may be led, who looketh unto man, and not unto the Lord.

But if we really be actuated by the spirit of our holy religion, doubtless we shall experimentally find, that to be what we appear is not merely the better, but the easier part; for surely the most delightful sensation of a rational being must be the consciousness of believing every tenet which he professes, of deserving every praise which he receives—the consciousness of gradually acquiring the mastery over every inveterate prepossession, over every latent and dangerous propensity, and every early and criminal habit—the consciousness of going on from strength to strength, till he attain the fulness of the stature of the man of God. With the satisfaction thus enjoyed by himself he will often compare the misery to which the hypocrite is exposed—alarmed as that hypocrite must be by the dread of discovery, the very excess of dissimulation has a tendency to betray him. Grant, however, that by a concurrence of favourable circumstances he for a season escapes detection, what, I beseech you, must be his feelings when he reviews the occurrences of the day that has past, and reclining on his pillow in solicitude and silence, he communes however involuntarily with his own heart? His long-desired and much-boasted reputation will serve only to aggravate his sufferings, by calling to his recollection the inglorious means by which he had acquired it. The commendations of a deluded world cannot then be heard, and when remembered they will speak the language

of reproof to his conscience, by reminding him that they are wholly undeserved. Even in this world the same conscience will visit him with the severest chastisement—it will inflict upon him the mortification of abasement—it will subject him to abasement without the delicacy of shame, and to the pangs of remorse without the ultimate solace of security in amendment—it will compel him to feel at length the intrinsic and inestimable value of that virtue which he had so often professed to reverence without one endeavour to practise it heartily, by laying open to him the deformity of those vices which he had presumed to commit in order to quiet compunction, and thus to obtain the praise of the most contemptible, or the most hateful of his fellow-creatures.

But to conclude. The full turpitude of such a man's guilt, and the terrible severity of his punishment, will be more apparent when I consider, as I intend to do, in a second discourse, the offence which such a sinner commits against the Supreme Being. From the observations, however, which I have already adduced, my brethren, you must see the weakness and the wickedness, the short-sighted craft, and the daring presumption of those deluded transgressors, who would follow the rules of virtue itself with eye-service only, and who being, as St. Paul calls them, men-pleasers, are prepared to be alike ostentatious in right and wrong—not from any commendable regard to their essential differences, but from the corrupt desire of worldly profit, or worldly applause. You will perceive the useful-

ness of consistency as well as alacrity in the course of your moral agency—you will set a very high value not only on the purity, but the dignity of a Christian life—you will cherish the wholesome fear and the animating love of God in singleness of heart—you will do what is your known and your bounden duty, not as unto men, but as unto the Lord; for both reason and religion will warrant you in the hope, that from the justice and mercy of that Lord, you will hereafter receive the recompence of your zeal for his honour, and your fidelity in his service.

# SERMON XXXIII.

COLOSSIANS iii. 23.

*Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men.*

IN a former discourse, I explained to you the primary meaning of the text, as addressed by St. Paul to the servants of heathen masters. I pointed out a necessary distinction between their religious character, in which they had recently been delivered from the bondage of sin and the ceremonial law of the Jews, and their social character, in which they continued under lawful subjection to their earthly employers. I then stated that the language of St. Paul was capable of a larger and more important accommodation to the whole system of our behaviour, as creatures who are furnished with powers, and obliged by commands to execute the will of our almighty and righteous Master, who is in heaven.

After this introduction, I proposed, first, to consider the mingled rashness and meanness of permitting the love of worldly praise to constitute an exclusive principle of action; secondly, the increased danger of that love when it becomes excessive, and

obstructs the discharge of our most important duties towards God; and, thirdly, the exact influence which a regard to the opinion of the world may in some circumstances very properly and very meritoriously be allowed to have on our conduct. The first of these heads has been already discussed; and you then saw the extreme folly, turpitude, and wretchedness of hypocrisy, whether it assumed the mask of religion, in order to impose on the wise and virtuous, or whether, in a contrary course, it affected an uncommon degree of vice and impiety, to captivate the sympathy of the wicked, and to excite the astonishment of the ignorant. But of what value, I would ask, is the praise of corrupt and deluded minds, when opposed to the contempt of the sagacious, and the detestation of the upright? How light too in the balance are the commendations even of the best of men, when our hearts secretly inform us that they are utterly unmerited — that they are bestowed on specious appearances, not on solid realities — and that the dictates of our own serious conscience, and the sentence of an all-wise God, stand in direct opposition to the well-meant, but not well-founded applause of our fellow-creatures.

Recollect what I stated to you, not merely about the meanness, but the inconsistency of the hypocrite. Cowardly in adversity, and insolent in prosperity will be that person whom the Apostle points out to us as obeying the laws of God merely for eye-service, and as striving to please man by false pretences. If he sometimes endeavours to pay an

external tribute of exterior homage to religion and virtue, his sentiments are cold, and his efforts are feeble. If he be tempted by pleasure, or oppressed by calamity, he has no regular and fixed principle to deliver him from the danger to which he is exposed. He enjoys no firm and sure satisfaction from reflection upon himself. He shudders at the prospect of detection and infamy from the world. He cannot look up with affiance to the favour, or even the mercy of heaven. On the contrary, he that is virtuous, and heartily religious, sustains a noble and uniform character amidst the sudden changes, amidst the uncertain chances, amidst the formidable perils, and the inevitable sorrows of this mortal life. He thinks without terror of death itself, and he enters upon eternity with faith that cannot be staggered, and with hope that cannot be depressed.

These plain, but I trust pertinent and simple observations, will recall to your memory the remarks which I made under the first head; and they will prepare you, at the same time, for the contents of the second, in which we are to consider the causes and the kinds of those obstacles, which an excessive fondness for human praise throws in the way of our obedience to the deity.

What, then, I would ask, is the declared will of God, even in the very loose, I grant, and very faint, but I contend also the unavoidable and unalterable, opinion of him who seldom refers to it as a rule in his choice of ends, or adaptation of means? It stands thus—Thou shalt not take the name of the

Lord in vain; thou shalt keep the sabbath holy; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour; thou shalt not say to thy brother, Raca — thou empty wretch; Mora — thou stubborn and presumptuous. But the person to whom I am adverting, when kneeling before the altar, or summoned before a tribunal, will swear that good is evil, and evil is good, if there be any prospect for him to obtain credit, and upon that credit to found a claim for favour. He will scoff at the hallowed service prescribed for the sabbath, if by such derision he can flatter the intellectual pride of the scoffer, and be in his own turn complimented for exemption from vulgar superstition. He will triumph in his success over the ready compliance, and yet more in his victory over the long but ineffectual resistance of the seduced female; and many he knows there are who will ascribe that success, and that victory, to the grace of his person, the elegance of his manners, and the fascinating eloquence of his persuasion. He will partake with the sceptered or the armed plunderer in the spoils which they have seized from the helpless, and with them he will farther share in the glory which is often obtained by skilfulness in contrivance, or hardihood in enterprize. He will accuse the innocent and insult the meritorious, if by such means he can secure the confidence of the inconsiderate, the concurrence of the envious, and the applause of the wicked. That he should thus act, "as unto men," is indeed a point upon which he and they have a reciprocal

advantage — he from restless vanity, and they from conscious guilt. Are not the perjurer, the sabbath-breaker, the adulterer, the robber, the false witness, and the slanderer, previously disposed to welcome their advocate; and, in pleading their cause, does he not vilify that of which God approves, and justify that which God condemns? Is it not, directly or indirectly, his aim to acquire the good will of persons who are anxious to find a shelter from the reproaches of their own conscience in the unjust sentence which is passed upon their conduct by the vain, who hunger and thirst after praise — and by the obsequious, who convert it into an instrument of selfishness? Moreover, do we not, in point of fact, perceive the love of popularity often blended with the love of profit and power; and may we not with justice maintain, that he, who is influenced by such motives, acts, "as unto men," and not "as unto the Lord?"

To the sage, who fathoms the depths, and traces the windings of the human heart, numerous must appear the instances in which self-delusion is auxiliary to self-conceit. The process of examining the real sources of our own actions, and the real extent of our own feelings, is laborious; and the results too are painful, after all the efforts which we may make to impose upon ourselves. But the success of those efforts is facilitated, and the inquietude of those results is in some degree mitigated, when other men think, or at least speak of our infirmities as if they existed not, and commend our better qualities beyond the point in which they do exist. If on the

one hand we are slow to believe that which annoys us, we are on the other hand as swift to admit that which pleases us; and pleasing it surely is, that our faults should be extenuated, and our merits overvalued. From this propensity then, which we have to rely on the judgment of others, and to escape the mortifications and the toils of a serious appeal to our own bosoms, a sagacious observer of man was led to give to his correspondent this valuable instruction. "Beware," says he, "lest about yourself you believe others rather than yourself."

Many indeed are the grounds of the caution just now mentioned to you. Some men form their judgments hastily, and are misled by false candour; others flatter, in order that they themselves may be flattered; others forbear to blame, lest they should provoke the frown of the powerful; and others are eager to praise, that they may be favoured with their smiles. Some commend extravagantly opinions, for the propagation of which they have been zealous, and extol pursuits in literature, sciences, and arts, in which they suppose themselves to be eminent. And when panegyric is bestowed by those who are much above them, or those who are somewhat below them, vanity in either case restrains the impatience of envy. Others, as I have before remarked, solicitously wish a reserve of palliation to those faults to which they are themselves addicted; and a kind of secret confederacy is then formed between the agent and the observer in behalf of vice.

Amid so many ensnaring opportunities for incurring less blame, or for gaining more praise than we

deserve, it will not surprise us that we should often be induced to act "as unto men," rather than "as unto the Lord." I must not pass by another fruitful and baneful source of self-delusion, which is to be found in local or temporary circumstances. Some virtues are less esteemed, and some vices less abhorred, at one place, and in one time, than at another. He, therefore, who acts "as unto men," will shape his judgment and his conduct according to the prejudices and the habits of those who are around him. He will commit what the supreme being has forbidden, because he is in no danger here of blame; he will neglect what the deity has enjoined, because he has a very probable chance of human praise. His refuge is in the perverted sympathies of other men; and with other men he has at once a common temptation to do what is amiss, and a common interest in having the guilt of his deeds disregarded.

There is, you know, a very popular, and in some degree a well-founded maxim, that a lie told frequently, and told successfully, is at last believed even by the liar himself. His imagination is strongly acted upon by his affections, and his affections are strongly influenced by the pleasing remembrance of escape from detection, and perhaps the yet more pleasing consciousness of having imposed upon the credulity of mankind by the ingenuity of his statements, or the dexterity of his arguments, or the embellishments of his language. Similar is that progressive self-deceit to which we are exposed when other men give us the credit which we are

desirous to gain, with an indistinct consciousness of not deserving it. We become confident from long success; and as our pride meets with reiterated gratifications from the force of appearances only, we feel little concern to substitute realities. Such, however, is often the condition of human affairs, that in order to secure and perpetuate the commendations which are so dear to us, we are called upon to make compliances utterly inconsistent with honour, and even innocence. We therefore defend others, for the purpose of encouraging their activity in defending ourselves. We readily admit pretences which we know to be hollow, lest our own should be rigorously ascertained. Thus acting "as unto men," we must often violate the will of God, and justify the violation of it to those fellow-creatures upon whose approbation, earned as it is by studied artifice or inglorious concession, our character, and with it our happiness, depend.

Such are the perilous consequences of an habitual and undue regard to human opinion. In the mean time, there can be no sure protection from those unforeseen and untoward events, which, as I told you in a former discourse, strip the hypocrite of his mask, and bring down upon him scorn which he cannot mitigate, and suspicions which he cannot avert. There is no firm security for him from the inward warnings of conscience. His sense of right and wrong, though weakened by the success of imposture, is not destroyed. The consciousness of guilt, though for a time it may be soothed, cannot always be stifled. Sometimes he will feel with

anguish, that his faults would have been less frequent, or less odious, if he had not been tempted to commit them by the hope of secrecy; and that his approaches to virtue would have been greater, if he had been content to practice it really, and with a steady view to the approbation of God rather than of man. Often too, the chastisement, which he suffers from the reproaches of his conscience, becomes more severe from the concomitant loss of that praise, in the expectation of which he had been tempted to commit the offences upon which that conscience, when formally awakened, compels him to look back with shame and with terror. Let it not be forgotten, that the very circumstances, which for a long time protected him from the condemnation of his own heart, have a fatal tendency to increase both his wickedness and his danger. Often must he have seen, that in his attempts to please men, he runs a hazard of displeasing Almighty God. But to escape from the inquietude which must necessarily seize his mind, when objects so disproportionate stand before him, he will have recourse to every expedient which affords him the prospect of being for a moment reconciled to himself. He will adopt with eagerness every argument which shall banish God from his thoughts. He will turn away his attention from the proofs of a future state. He will accustom himself to consider the deity as presiding over the natural world, but as exercising no government over the moral; and when opinions so agreeable to him are familiarized, there will cease to be any marked and alarming competition between the

praise of God and the praise of man. The one will be gradually less and less an object of belief, and therefore of desire; the other is placed immediately within his view, and the means for obtaining it are, as he experimentally knows, within his reach. In this state of mind, he cannot be expected to aim at the performance of any arduous duty, or to resist, when his vanity is to be gratified by the commission of any crime which the deity has forbidden. Happily for mankind, the love of virtue and the hatred of vice are so generally diffused, that an avowed disregard of it far more rarely will procure for us the praise of men, than reverence for it, though it be only assumed.

Now in my former discourse I laid before you the baseness and profligacy of those persons who have, or suppose themselves to have, opportunities for acquiring popularity, by the undisguised profession of infidelity and libertinism. That such cases do occur, must be known to every observer of human life; and because the example of such men is dangerous by contagion in seducing the young, and in hardening the licentious, I thought it my duty to warn you even against the remote possibility of danger. But it more frequently happens that, for some general or some particular purpose, they who mean to be pleasers of men set up pretensions to superior sanctity; and, availing themselves of the sincere regard which is felt by their fellow-creatures for real piety, win it over to the cause of that which is unsubstantial and false.

But who, my brethren, can for a moment imagine

that a man of this description offers an acceptable sacrifice to the Almighty. His prayers may be long—his praises may be loud—his thanksgiving may be in appearance ardent. But he who sitteth in Heaven, and to whom the secrets of all hearts are open, will laugh at such a worshipper. Thus much the common-sense of every deceiver must tell him, when he looks in the dark and foul recesses of his own bosom. No efforts, which he may make to explain away the principles of justice, or to stifle the feelings of humanity, can long justify the hypocrite to himself, or enable him entirely to lose sight of the relation in which he stands to Almighty God; for it is the united voice of reason and religion, that God is the creator of all things—that his providence is ever watchful for our preservation—that in him are the issues of life and death—that his mercies are over all his works, and that his very chastisements are but instances of his love. But does the man who is content with eye-service, sincerely and reverently meditate on these momentous truths? Does he gratefully feel that God has made the most ample provision, not only for our comfort in this world, but our well-being in the world to come; and that, in order to complete the gracious purposes of his moral government, Jesus Christ came down from Heaven, taught the purest doctrines, set before us the most perfect example, and for our sakes shed upon the cross his righteous blood?

When such is the transcendental goodness of God, and such have been the meritorious sufferings

of his Son, must not the hypocrite, who perhaps secretly disbelieves much of what he openly professes, offer up a sacrifice which deserves to be called an abomination? The nature and the magnitude of the blessings which such a man has received, must aggravate his guilt. He acts, indeed, as if he had forgotten that God is an all-wise being, and therefore cannot be deceived—that he is Almighty, and therefore must not be mocked.

By uncommon skill in the arts of imposture, or by some fortunate juncture in outward affairs, the man-pleaser may sometimes escape the notice of his fellow-creatures. He may impose upon relations, because they are unwilling to see faults—he may impose upon friends, because they are prejudiced in favour of seeming excellencies—he may impose even upon enemies, because they are at too great distance to explore the obscure and crooked mazes of his breast. But every kind of artifice is unavailing before the great God of Heaven—he knoweth when the hypocrite prayeth with his lips, and not with his heart; and therefore, when such a worshipper spreads forth his hands, and lifts up his voice, the deity granteth not what has been presumptuously asked. God sees him, when he retires from the noisy activity of the world into the abode of his family, or the privacy of his chamber. God, though thought to be afar off, heareth all his profane and malevolent words. God is a witness of all his hidden faults, and pierces through the veil which is spread even over his impure desires. He distinguishes between generosity and ostentation—be-

tween the genuine honesty which springs from rooted principle, and that mere abstinence from villainy, which is prompted by the dread of human laws—between a sincere and humble spirit of piety, and that pretended zeal for the glory of God which spends its force in such pharisaical supplications as are uttered chiefly that they may be heard by men.

Let us then, my brethren, beware, lest in the attempt to deceive such a being we may have been found to practise the most dangerous deceit against ourselves. Let us not be cold and languid in that service, which cannot be performed too diligently and too heartily. In all our actions, whether known or unknown to men—in the bustle of our daily labour, and in the stillness of our domestic retirement—in the stated offices of devotion performed within the sanctuary, and in every instance of social intercourse of our neighbourhood—let us be single-hearted, and let us in every thought, word, and deed, faithfully dedicate our whole lives to the salvation of our souls.

Proceed we now to the last head—in which I propose to examine how far a regard to praise might properly, and even meritoriously, influence our moral conduct.

Now our condition in the probationary state of our existence is such, that every motive to right conduct should be studied by us with a precision, and cherished with an assiduity, proportionate to its comparative and actual usefulness. We are all sensible of our latent propensity to evil, and of the force that propensity derives from the temptations

which continually surround us. Now our first and best security from danger is the habit of reflection on the moral law, which is engraven on ou rhearts—on the ratification of that law by the revealed will of God—on the clear commands, and unequivocal prohibitions contained in the Gospel—on the gracious promises, and awful threats, by which they are respectively enforced. The love of virtue therefore, and hatred of vice, as resulting from the joint influence of these religious considerations, should be our primary rule of action. It is, however, mercifully ordained by our Creator, that other motives should co-operate towards the same end; and among them the natural, and I would add, under due restrictions, the laudable wish of conciliating the esteem of our fellow-creatures, holds a distinguished rank. Their praise and their blame strike us with the force of objects which are placed near to us, and the efficacy of which is indisputable. He that unfeignedly would please the virtuous, pays a tribute of respect to virtue itself, and encourages other men to venerate and practise it. He that avowedly shuns vice from a well-founded sense of its loathsome properties and pernicious consequences, virtually instructs other men to be on their guard against the violent impulses, or ensnaring seductions, of their own criminal inclinations. No action surely can be the less acceptable in the sight of a good God, because it is pleasing to good men; and the reason is, that God himself has inspired men with the love of good actions, and he in many respects has made their happiness dependent upon the

performance of them. The whole system of sympathy maintained by some philosophers, and coinciding with the system of utility, as adopted by others, elucidates and justifies this very position, unless indeed you would impute to the moral world an entire waste of energy in many of our purest and most delightful sentiments. Such a sentiment is approbation, and in the uncorrupted state of the human mind, the object of approbation must always be, or seem to be, endowed with some properties immediately agreeable, or ultimately useful. Hence by the sympathy of virtuous men the individual himself is improved; the principle upon which he acts is more extensively recognised; and that instinctive desire of imitating what we approve, which our moral governor had implanted in us, adds to the general stock of real virtue.

Thus you see the grounds upon which the love of praise may be adopted in subordination to our reverence for the law, which commands us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and is succeeded by another injunction equally intelligible and equally peremptory, to love our neighbour as ourselves. When thus influenced, this love of praise may have a beneficial influence on our most trivial and most important actions, without decoying us into the extravagances of affectation, or the littlenesses of vanity. It connects even the trivial with our sense of decorum. It exalts the important by appealing to that benevolence, which by the very frame of our minds, we always feel towards a virtuous agent. Much, indeed, of the pleasure, which the commen-

dations of others give to us, arises from the consciousness, that others have previously found pleasure in the good-will which we have manifested towards them—in the good-services which we have rendered to them—and in that lively sentiment which accompanies every appeal to our love of excellence, and which implies a direct acknowledgment, that we understand in what it consists, and rejoice in what it effects. In this manner doth regard for the favourable opinions of our fellow creatures contribute to the aggregate stock of human happiness. It is beneficial to us in all our social relations, whether private or public. · It inspires the defender of his country in a good cause with additional valour. It raises the ambition of an enlightened and honest statesman above the blind and inordinate love of power for selfish purposes, and extends his view in supporting the rights, and promoting the welfare of those who are committed to his care. It leads the scholar to lay out the stores of his learning in explaining the phraseology of Holy Writ, and in rescuing the sense or the spirit of it, upon sure grounds of criticism, from the jargon of illiterate fanatics, and the scoffs of invidious gainsayers. It encourages men, whose genius points towards natural philosophy, to direct their talents towards such improvements, or such discoveries, as are beneficial to society in the manual productions of art, and the wide extension of commerce. It induces the metaphysician to explore all the intricate properties of the human mind, and to apply the result of his researches in illustrating the essential attributes of the

Deity, in vindicating his moral government, and in showing, that with diligent culture, and under proper regulations, all the intellectual and all the moral faculties given unto us, are well calculated to advance virtue, and to diffuse happiness. It urges the husbandman and the artisan to fresh trials of skill, or fresh efforts of industry in their respective employments. It binds to us friends and relations by new ties of affection, when they perceive that in our endeavours to please them, we mean to promote their real welfare, and thus deserve the applause which under such circumstances it is even their duty to bestow.

Such, in concurrence with the unfeigned and deliberate desire of obeying God, are the salutary effects of a regard to the sentiments of our fellow-creatures, as that regard actuates men of sound judgment, and well-formed principles. It becomes, you see, not the chief, but an additional incentive to those actions which excite respect, or conciliate regard; and from the structure of the human mind, the force of various motives co-operating to the same end at once regulates and increases the distinct efficacy of each. It therefore follows that by the habit of doing all things laudable in the sight of men, we acquire a greater facility in our obedience to God himself. On the other hand, he who is accustomed to adapt the most important parts of his conduct to the divine will, attains, at the same time, that delicacy of feeling, that justness of thinking, that propriety of acting, which render him more amiable, or more respectable in the eyes

of men. Our folly indeed, and our perverseness, our extreme vanity or mean hypocrisy, may, and often do, produce an opposition between that which is done as "unto the Lord," and that which we do "as unto men;" and hence, in a religious point of view, the Pharisees are to be condemned for seeking the praise of men rather than the praise of God. But if these deceivers had reflected a little, they would have found that the very same actions of which God disapproves, are generally disapproved when known by the bulk of mankind; and that the loud prayers, and the long robes, by which they drew the attention of the multitude, would by that multitude have been seen with distrust and contempt, had they perceived, what God did perceive, that they were severed from true piety of heart, and intended to conceal the foulest passions, and the most wicked deeds. I must however press it again and again upon your notice, that the contrariety between pleasing men and God is not constant, but occasional; and that it more often arises in our depraved minds, than in the real events of life. For though from haste, or prejudice, or imperfect information, good men are censured undeservedly, yet the rectitude of their behaviour frequently comes to light at last; and they who primarily intended to merit the favour of God do eventually obtain, what it was not their first wish even to deserve, the applause of men. On the other hand, when mankind by degrees pierce into the real character of those who have deluded them, their judgments are such as good sense warrants, and Christianity virtually prescribes. They

either discover, and discovering lament, their own folly and rashness in commending what, on calmer reflection, or after fuller experience, they find to be a proper object of censure, or they perceive that the actions which they most warmly extolled were only delusive and showy appearances; and in either of these cases they exchange scorn for esteem, and abhorrence for love. It merits also our consideration, that as some degree of force is exerted by the moral sense, even in the most thoughtless—as some love of real right, and some power of distinguishing it from real wrong, are possessed, and even involuntarily exercised by the generality of the world, it will be always found, that he who tramples on the laws of God, had no very rooted or very salutary principle of reverence for the suffrages of his fellow-creatures. Yet, if he really means to gain the approbation of the wise and good, he bears an indirect testimony to the duty of doing right things as "unto the Lord," while he intends to act only "as unto men." Consider, I beseech you, how does he try to impose upon his fellow-creatures? Is it not by seeming to do what God has enjoined by the spirit of natural, or the letter of revealed religion—to do what, if it were done honestly, would deservedly gain for him the good-will of man, and the approbation of God? But if he be so hardened as to aim at praise for bad actions from bad men, he shows an equal contempt of all that is esteemed venerable amongst the wisest and best of his fellow-creatures, as well as of all that is made obligatory by the Deity.

On the whole then, as in the common course of

affairs, an honest and prudent man will perceive, that while he obeys God he takes the surest method for satisfying the noblest part of his fellow-creatures; so, if by any contrariety of situation, the praise of men be thrown into a sort of competition with the favour of God, he cannot for a moment hesitate in the choice of that which might be preferred—whether he should look to fallible and sinful beings, or to him who is perfect and omniscient—whether to those, the sound of whose praise must quickly pass away, or to him who can confer upon us an everlasting reward. Let me farther entreat you to reflect upon the hollowness and insignificance of human praise, as it is often courted, and often granted. Popularity, you must know, may be acquired by abject concessions, and counterfeit appearances; and hence you are told by Jesus himself, Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers unto the false prophets, even they who hated the true prophets, and cast out their names as evil. Believe me, my hearers, when I declare to you that, in the emphatical and solemn words just now recited to you, and in other Scriptural passages intended to put you on the watch against an undue regard for human applause, there are no sentimental refinements, no rhetorical paradoxes, no metaphysical subtleties. They do not enjoin the singularity of the visionary, the churlishness of the recluse, or the boasted apathy of the stoic, who perhaps aimed obliquely at admiration at the very instant, and by the very act of disclaiming all concern about it.

The language of our Lord states real occurrences, and points to the source whence they flowed. For why were the true prophets slandered and put to death? Because they lifted up, sometimes a warning, and sometimes an accusing voice against their back-sliding and sinful countrymen, or their idolatrous and profligate kings. Why did all men speak well of the false prophets? Because they prophesied smooth things—because they consoled where they ought to have alarmed, and applauded where they ought to have reproved—because they were at once vain and ambitious, dishonest and impious—because they disregarded the righteous approbation of God, in order to obtain high-sounding panegyrics, and costly rewards from men. Are there no aspects then under which Christ's denunciation of woe against the encomiasts of the false prophets, and the accusers of the true, may be applied to ourselves? Yes, certainly. Let us imagine, that with the scymitar in one hand, and a bribe in the other, some Mahometan chieftain should call upon you to renounce the Gospel, and embrace the Koran; let us imagine that some gloomy inquisition required you to give up the pure and salutary tenets of Protestantism, and to adopt the most improbable tenets of his own religion in their grossest form—that he menaced you for your refusal with the dungeon, and the torture, and proffered some splendid enticement in the patronage of his sovereign, and the privileges of his church, as the recompence of your compliance; let us imagine, at any season, and under any government, that popularity, that wealth,

that high station, that gorgeous titles, that the insidious courtesies of a sceptered tempter, or the eager benedictions of a powerful and bigotted priesthood were within your reach, if you would consent to avow some opinion which your judgment had seriously rejected as erroneous and pernicious (it may be), or to commit some outrage from which your soul shrinks with horror; though all men were to speak well of you—though the palace and the cottage, the senate and the theatre, resounded with your praise, yet be assured, that your insincerity, your cowardice, your venality, your injustice, or your cruelty, will, in characters never to be effaced, stand upon record against you in the registry of heaven.

Again, when your Lord denounced woe to his disciples, if all men should speak well of them, he foresaw that the world would, soon after his own death, traduce and persecute them for their faithful adherence to a crucified Master, and their steady opposition to the errors and corruptions of every Jew and every Gentile whom they were commissioned to convert; and under these circumstances it obviously was quite impossible for them, living as they did in an evil generation, to gain a speedily and extensively good name, without betraying their sacred trust, without suppressing some useful doctrine which they were appointed to disseminate, or countenancing some vicious practice which they were authorized to restrain. Christ, moreover, knew generally that they who want wisdom, magnanimity, and integrity, to support realities in virtue

and religion, do not want cunning to put on specious appearances, and that in various situations of human affairs men are induced to please their fellow-creatures at the hazard of displeasing their Maker. When therefore the danger of seeking, and even receiving unbounded and unmerited praise is expressed in language so energetic, the Gospel tells you in effect, that all men will speak well of you if you flatter their pride, if you encourage their prejudices, if you exaggerate their better qualities, and explain away the guilt of their secret or their open faults. And does not experience teach you the same interesting lesson? Does it not also teach you, that they who are utterly regardless of well-earned praise, will, from the same perverseness of judgment, and the same depravity of spirit, gradually become callous to deserved blame? Does not reason coincide with religion in convincing you, that the same actions which lead you to hope for the approbation of God, will likewise entitle you to look for some share of esteem from his sincere worshippers? The contrary supposition is at variance alike with our understanding and our feelings. Consider, I beseech you, shall not the oppressed be permitted to extol their protector, the indigent their benefactor, the afflicted their comforter? Shall not the serious parent be permitted to mingle the voice of praise with his smile and his blessing, when he recounts the joys impressed upon his soul by the affection of a beloved son? Shall not the faithful preceptor be permitted to commend, and by commending to encou-

rage, the industry, the docility, the ingenuous disposition, and the blameless morals of his pupil? Shall not the enlightened companion be permitted to proclaim openly what he must inwardly admire, in the friend of his bosom, when that friend hath performed some act of heroic self-command, or disinterested beneficence? Shall not the devout pastor be permitted to applaud out of the sanctuary, what he is bound to promote in it, when, with eyes uplifted to heaven, he beholds the growth of his flock in temperance, honesty, brotherly kindness, and piety? And is it conceivable, my hearers, for one moment, that they who bestow, or they who accept such praise, from such motives, and upon such subjects, stand in the smallest danger of being arraigned at the last day for having acted unto men, and not unto the Lord?

But farther, I said that virtuous actions may often procure for us at once the approbation of God, and of truly good men. But I ought to add more directly what I have before intimated, that such actions have a tendency, at least, to obtain for us the encomiums of the bad as well as the good; for in the absence of evil desires we naturally respect that which we may not have the fortitude to practise. The libertine may envy, but cannot hate temperance; the thief cannot dislike honesty; the infidel cannot unfeignedly and entirely despise that piety which he believes to be genuine, and accompanied by correspondent habits of innocence, probity, and benevolence. In reality, he that is accustomed to act as unto men, cannot always stifle, nor always dissemble, the reverence which he

feels, however involuntarily, for other and better men whom he perceives to act as unto the Lord. Now our religion, as was just now remarked, in all the bearings of all its precepts, appeals to the common and unperverted sentiments of mankind as operating in their common and manifest experience. It forbids us, no doubt, to pour forth our supplications, and distribute our alms in the open street—to court greetings in the broad market-place—to claim the first seats at the crowded feast, or in the hallowed synagogue; but it does not forbid us to be ardent, and, upon many occasions, exemplary in the exercise of devotion and charity—of that devotion, be it observed, which by the very constitution of our nature commands respect, and of charity which wins affection. "Whatsoever things," says St. Paul, "whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of *good report*—if there be any virtue, or if there be any praise, think on these things." Does not St. Paul here, in the most glowing terms, enumerate and extol the very same excellencies which Heathen moralists, in their happier moments, had luminously described, and eloquently enforced? Could he mean that his converts should think on these things without approving of them, or that approving they should not endeavour to practise them, or that practising them eventually, or even designedly with the approbation of men, they should upon that very account forfeit the approbation of God? Again, do we not read of Christ himself, that he increased in

favour with God and man? And does not Theophylact thus interpret this striking passage, "Christ habitually did those things which were well-pleasing to God, and praised by men?" Yes, my brethren, he who spake "as never man spake," was by his own immediate followers revered and beloved upon earth, for the very same bright assemblage of excellencies which procured for him in heaven a name that is above every other name. By rational believers in every country, and of every society, in every succeeding age, he has been, he now is, and ever will be, revered and beloved for meekness, for humility, for unspotted holiness, for tender compassion, for patience under sufferings, for placability to enemies, for unfeigned, earnest, constant piety in ascribing glory, and honour, and power to that Being who sitteth upon his celestial throne for ever and ever. If you therefore endeavour to follow the example of your Saviour, depend upon it that the Christian graces, which obtain for you the good-will of unprejudiced and virtuous observers, will not obstruct you in your higher aims to merit an approving sentence from your judge at the last day.

Doubtless, then, we shall conduct ourselves like men, who really believe, that their "labour will not be in vain in the Lord," if, in the arduous affairs of public life, our loyalty be without obsequiousness, and our patriotism without turbulence—if, in the humbler, but most valuable duties of a private station, we are temperate without austerity, and benevolent without ostentation—if, in the weightier and

sacred concerns of religion, our zeal does not degenerate into intolerance, nor our moderation into lukewarmness, nor our faith into fanaticism, nor our piety into superstition. By thus avoiding all unsafe extremes, and all unbecoming display, you will, on the one hand, have the merit of him who prayeth secretly, with the inward assurance of being rewarded openly; and, on the other hand, you will act up to the spirit of our Lord's injunction for your light so to shine before men, that they may see your good works; that seeing them, they may commend and imitate, but not flatter you, and thus intelligibly and acceptably glorify that Being, who has both exalted and disposed you to love virtue in your hearts, and to recommend it by your example.

To conclude, with a few practical remarks suggested by the topics that have come before us.—"Whatsoever thou dost," says the text, "do it heartily." Now suppose, my brethren, a man, before whom is placed some object, upon which his character, his prosperity, the health of his body, and the peace of his mind ultimately depend—suppose him endowed with sufficient understanding to appreciate the worth, and sufficient strength to secure the attainment of that object—suppose him to view it sometimes with ardent desire, and sometimes with listless indifference—suppose him to pursue it by irregular starts, and without any settled plan, when he should be continually advancing towards the highest prize that is set before him—after labouring yesterday, suppose him to trifle to-day, to slumber to-morrow, and on the next day to strike into some

long-extended and winding bye path of amusement to fancy, repose to indolence, or gratification to sensuality—would you not acknowledge the aggravated demerit of such a man? Would you pity his disappointment? Should you be surprised at his destruction? Yet such is the case of every man, who in regard to his religious interests, does not heartily strive to preserve them. What is the command? Be faithful. Who is the author of that command? An omnipotent and omniscient Deity. Where is the guide? The infallible Gospel of Christ. What are the proffered wages to diligence and fidelity? Eternal happiness. Surely, if you reflect upon these considerations, you will find no plea of extenuation for remissness, no scantiness of encouragement to exertion.

Again, the Apostle directs you, in all your doings, to keep your eye fixed, not upon the opinions of men, but upon the judgment of God. I have already told you the numerous and weighty reasons, which should determine your choice, when the one cannot be gained without the forfeiture of the other. Let us then never forget, that the love of praise, even from the most virtuous of men, must always, as a principle be subordinate to the desire of pleasing God—that an excessive impatience to please men is often the source of the most contemptible inconsistency, or the most odious guilt—that vanity leads to hypocrisy—that hypocrisy is always in danger of detection and scorn—that the momentary gratifications, which it experiences from success, are scanty compensations for inward dissatisfaction, and

the unalterable dread of being understood, where the offender is not for the present even suspected, and of being despised, where he is now esteemed. Let us farther remember, that our motives and deeds even upon earth, though misconceived by the precipitate, or misrepresented by the malignant, are distinctly known, and will be justly appreciated by our unerring Judge, who is above—every struggle in which we resist our unruly appetites—every sacrifice, which we make of worldly profits, fame, and honours, when inconsistent with our character as Christians—every toil we endure, and every danger we encounter.

Singleness of heart, united with earnestness—activity mingled with patience—good-will to our neighbour, animated by the love of God—these, my brethren, are the duties which the Apostle recommends to us, as moral and redeemed creatures; and then only we shall perform them effectually, when disdaining to act as men-pleasers, with mere eye-service, and striving heartily to do what the Deity has commanded to be done, we aspire to immortality, as the precious inheritance of approved sons, and the glorious recompence of servants faithful to their Lord.

# SERMON XXXIV.

## CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO HELL.

### PSALM xvi. 9 & 10.

*Wherefore my heart was glad, and my glory rejoiced; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For why? thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither shalt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.*

IN two excellent discourses of Dr. Clarke lately delivered to you from this pulpit, and occasionally mingled with remarks of my own, I endeavoured to show you what is really the scriptural account of Christ's descent into the grave, and how scanty proof it furnishes for us to suppose that Christ actually went down to preach in hell. In conformity to my promise, I shall endeavour to throw additional light upon the subject from the decrees of Christian councils, and from the opinions of some early Fathers eminently distinguished by their learning, zeal, and orthodoxy. But it is proper for me to call your attention to some preliminary observations.

In traditions adopted without research, and propagated without caution—in the imagination heated at one moment by enthusiasm, and in another darkened by superstition—in a sincere, but inconside-

rate and intemperate zeal to multiply the benevolent actions, and thus promote the glory of our Redeemer, we may account for the origin and the continuance of the common notion on the subject we are now discussing; and when it had received the sanction of a creed, from the decrees of any council, or in the formularies of any church, hesitation would be imputed to fastidiousness, and dissent would be charged with impiety. We must not lose sight of other causes which influence opinion. Explanation, as attempted with more or less skill, gradually changes the form of the question. Defence, as conducted with more or less earnestness, imperceptibly introduces extraneous matter. The charms of novelty are succeeded by the promptness of custom, and the confidence of prejudice; and singularity casts upon presumed facts that imposing air which mystery throws around controverted doctrines; and the delusion is perpetuated by a latent and consolatory persuasion that in proportion as the subject is removed from the common apprehension, or common experience of mankind, there is increased merit in assent to the supposed authority of a revelation from Heaven. Reason distrusts her own strength, and conscience is alarmed by her own phantoms. From similar causes arise many of the unprofitable disputes which have divided and agitated the Christian world.

I am not aware of any very alarming consequences which may flow from the commonly received opinion, and be very injurious to the faith or the piety of the generality of Christians. But it

has no visible tendency to strengthen that faith, or to animate that piety. It may, in some cases, cherish that spirit of blind and superstitious credulity, the operation of which, upon subjects of much higher moment, is unfavourable to true religion. It has often perplexed well-meaning men with insuperable difficulties—it has given occasion sometimes to pertinent objections, and sometimes to contemptuous scoffs, among the opponents of the Gospel—and upon all these accounts it should be treated cautiously and argumentatively. But whatsoever be the result of the inquiry, the general credibility of the Scriptures will not be endangered, and their peculiar efficacy in making us wise unto salvation will not be diminished.

If we admit the commonly received opinion, nothing is gained to the great cause of revelation—if we reject it, nothing is lost to that cause. Was Christ the promised Messiah? Did he inculcate the doctrines ascribed to him by the four Evangelists? Did he cause the deaf to hear, the leper to be cleansed, the paralytic to rise from his bed and walk, and the blind to see? Did he die upon the cross, to set before us an example of humility and resignation? Did he rise from the dead to furnish us with a record for earnest of our own resurrection? If these things be true, *then* Christ, whether he did or did not preach to the spirits in hell, yet remains the infallible teacher, and the gracious redeemer of the whole human race. Now the notion which I am combating is confessedly not founded, directly or indirectly, upon words used by

Christ himself, who, as you must remember, often spoke of his own approaching death, of his resurrection upon the third day, of the glorified state preserved for him in Heaven, and of the extraordinary assistance which was to be given to his followers by the Paraclete, and who, before his ascension, opened the minds of his followers, that they might understand how all things which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning himself, must be fulfilled. Yet of a recent descent into hell he said not one syllable.

Again, the same notion is not supported by the express or implied meaning of the statements made by the four Evangelists, nor by St. Luke in the Acts, nor by St. Paul in his various Epistles, nor by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, nor by the author of the Apocalypse, nor by St. Jude in his Epistle, nor by St. John in his three Epistles, nor by St. Peter in his second Epistle; and as to a passage in his first, upon which the advocates for a descent into hell rest their belief, I shall presently endeavour to prevent all misconception of St. Peter's words by a full interpretation.

This fact, if it really existed, must have been known to most or all of the sacred writers; and, if known, it would hardly have been passed by, as it were, by common consent, without any express statement, and even without any distinct allusion. But surely the silence of so many attendants on our blessed Lord, who were appointed to convey to all future ages the history of their heavenly Master,

should make us cautious in ascribing to our Lord a transaction which seems to have no connection, near or remote, with his acknowledged and important mission upon earth — a transaction which does not enhance the expiatory merits of his death — a transaction which gives no additional clearness to his doctrines, nor additional weight to his commands—a transaction which neither illustrates nor confirms the truth of his resurrection — a transaction which, from the shortness of the time that must be assigned to it, does not appear to have produced, nor indeed was likely to produce, any beneficial effects upon the wicked beings in whose presence, and for whose sake, Christ is supposed by some persons to have gone down into hell. And, under such circumstances, does not this descent seem to our common sense a waste of effort, and, I may add, a waste of miracle? For the descent, if real, was miraculous. It may be asked, too, whether Christ preached only, or whether he also worked miracles to give effect to his preaching? If he worked miracles, where is the evidence that he worked them? For of those which he worked upon earth, there is ample and unequivocal testimony. If he preached only, but did *not* work miracles, is it probable that, as a teacher in hell for three days, he wrought that conviction which in the course of his ministry he often failed to impress, or effected that reformation which he often failed to effect among his countrymen, who had seen him heal the diseased, and give eyesight to the blind? Were the obdurate minds of the damned more speedily convinced, and more power-

fully moved by the mere preaching, than were the minds of the Jews, who had not only heard his authoritative instruction, but had also been eye-witnesses of his mighty works? Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles were converted by Christ and his Apostles—they repented after believing, and were ultimately saved. Had the spirits of hell opportunity not merely for believing, but for bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, and sufficient to deliver them from the continuance of the punishment inflicted upon them before Christ appeared among them?

Such are the apposite, and, I think, the irresistible questions which may be proposed to every man who contends for the common interpretation. Upon what then, you will ask, is that interpretation founded? I answer, upon one solitary and very obscure passage in the first Epistle of Peter. Misconceived it certainly has been for many centuries, and that misconception has produced the mention of the fact in some creeds. I shall therefore now lay before you the words of St. Peter, which I am confident do not warrant the conclusions sometimes drawn from them; and I shall subjoin such an explanation as to my mind is clear and satisfactory.

The words of St. Peter are, "Christ being put to death in the flesh, but restored to life (or made alive) by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached to the spirits *now* in prison, who formerly disbelieved, when the long-suffering of God earnestly waited in the days of Noah." Archbishop Newcome's note runs thus: "By which Spirit he,

as the representative of Jehovah, appeared on earth, and warned the whole world of their guilt and impending punishment. Gen. vi. 3, 7, 13. He warned, I say, the spirits *now* kept in custody, or safeguard (compare c. i. 5; Sheol Syr. in Hades, in the separate, invisible state) to the judgment of the last day. (See Beza, Schmidius, and Elsner.) Or, by which Spirit he inspired Noah, and thus, in effect, went (compare ἐλθὼν, Eph. ii. 27) and preached, &c. See c. i. 11." Mr. Pyle, a very judicious interpreter, says, "not that Christ *himself* preached, but preached by the spirit, i. e. by sending the spirit upon Noah, agreeably to 2 Pet. ii. 5, and 1 Pet. i. 11." He subjoins the interpretation of a sensible expositor, who paraphrased the Epistle after Locke's manner; and you will observe, that he, like Archbishop Newcome, thought it necessary to insert *now* before the words *in prison*. The paraphrase runs thus: "By which Spirit he (Christ) endeavoured to do good to mankind in former ages, inspiring Noah, and thereby preaching unto those who are *now* spirits—are souls —in prison, or in *safe custody*, in the state of the dead, but formerly disobedient, &c." Thus, you see, it was not Christ who preached personally and immediately, but mediately by the Spirit. The Spirit preached, not to the great body of sinners, but particularly to those, who sinned in the days of Noah. The Spirit preached, not to persons who had been condemned to a state of punishment in hell, but to those who had been formerly disobedient, when Noah was preparing his ark, who are now in custody, and reserved for the judgment of the last day.

But even in this controverted passage we are not told, that Christ went down into hell in order to preach; and therefore the words of St. Peter leave us at full liberty to consider Christ as having descended into the grave, from which he was to rise again miraculously, and in which he remained three days.

Here then you have an immediate *agent*, different from that which is supposed in the common and erroneous interpretation of St. Peter; for it is the Spirit, which preached, not Christ personally. You have a different *time;* for it was in the age of Noah, not during the three days when Christ lay in the grave. You have a different *place;* for it was not Hell, but the country in which Noah lived. You have different *persons;* for they to whom the Spirit preached, were not the accursed inhabitants of Hell, but the contemporaries of Noah. You have a different *purpose;* for there is no resemblance between the Spirit, which preached unto the unrighteous contemporaries of Noah, to check their ungodliness, lest they should be destroyed by the flood, and the preaching of Christ to wicked spirits, who were already suffering in the fire of Gehenna, and of whom we do not learn that even *one* was so influenced by the instruction of Christ, as to be reformed from wickedness, and released from torment.

The very learned Dr. Hicks, in a sermon, where earnestness is recommended in contending for the faith, has given a full and accurate account of the contents of various creeds upon the descent of Christ into Hades.

In the creed of the church of Jerusalem, which, as

we know from Scripture, was the first church, we have a form of confession, commonly called the Apostles' Creed. It cannot be traced to the times of the Apostles, but by some learned men it is supposed to resemble the creed of the church of Jerusalem. The words used here are taken from the catechism of Cyril, who about the year 350 was catechist in the church of Jerusalem, and afterwards bishop of it. The words are "he was crucified, dead, and buried; he rose again the third day from the dead, and ascended into heaven." Here there is no mention of the descent into hell or the grave.

The next is the creed of the church of Alexandria, of which St. Mark was the first bishop extant in the ecclesiastical history of Socrates, who sets it down as it was produced at the Council of Nice. The words are, "I believe in one God the Father Almighty, and in the Lord Jesus Christ his son, who came, and was incarnated, suffered, and ascended into heaven." Here also there is no mention of the descent into the grave.

In the famous creed, which Eusebius produced in the Council of Nice, we have these words, "Christ, who was incarnate for our salvation, and conversed with men, and suffered, and rose again the third day, and ascended to the Father." Here the descent is not mentioned. This confession was admitted in the Council of Nice; and though for the better confutation of the Arian heresy, the fathers made some alterations in it, yet they did not say that Christ descended into hell. The Emperor Justinian declared, 534 years after Christ, that he

would rely on the confessions of the first five general Councils, and it is only in one of them, which is the Church of Aquileia, the descent is inserted; and in that one you will be told, the old Roman Creed omitted those words.

Irenæus tells us, that in the Scriptures, we read of the advent of Christ, of his birth of a virgin, of his passion, of his resurrection from the dead, and his bodily ascension to heaven—not a word is said of the descent.

Tertullian, in his rule of faith, says, that the Son of God suffered, that he was dead, and buried, according to the Scriptures, and raised again by the Father, and received into heaven. Here then we have a negative proof from that rule which Tertullian elsewhere calls the law of faith, and the only immoveable and irreformable rule of faith, even of that faith, which he saith all people ought to seek and believe.

I shall now enumerate the Creeds, in which it is mentioned. In the Creed of the Church of Aquileia, extant in the exposition of Ruffinus, a presbyter, of that Church, we read "Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried and descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead." But some copies of this Creed vary, and omit the descent. The ancient Roman Creed, says Hicks, as Ruffinus informs us, was the same with this of Aquileia, excepting that it had not these words "he descended into hell;" so that, as Bishop Usher observes, the Creed which the Church of Rome now uses, and we from them commonly call the Apostles' Creed,

is the old Apostolical Roman Creed revised with some additions, and particularly of that article in the Aquileian Creed of Christ's descent into hell. But though the Aquileian Creed contain the descent, the ancient Roman Creed, as I have told you, did not, neither does that Nicene Creed, which you hear at the end of the Communion of our Common Prayer-book. In a breviary of fundamentals ascribed to Thaddæus, the disciple of St. Thomas, we read, how "Christ was crucified, and descended into hell, and broke through into that prison which never had been broken in unto, and rose again, and raised up with him the dead, who had slept many ages." On this formulary, as it relates to the descent of Christ, no man of judgment will lay the smallest stress; and he will particularly notice that the Scriptures, by which we are guided, say not one syllable about the persons, who, as the formulary tells us, were raised with Christ from the dead. Let us then balance the evidence of Councils and Fathers, as they contain the omission or insertion of the descent. On the side of omission, we have three of the first councils; and as to the fourth Creed of the Council of Aquileia the evidence is doubtful, because the old Romish Creed, founded upon it, does not mention the article of descent. Irenæus and Tertullian, two distinguished fathers of the Christian Church, in the Creeds which they adopt, are silent about the descent. For the insertion, we have the breviary of fundamentals ascribed to Thaddæus, and this testimony is of no authority whatsoever.

As to the Creed which you read in your Prayer-

book, which is commonly called the Apostles', it was of later date than the Creed of the Church of Jerusalem. In the original of the Church of Jerusalem, so far as we learn from Cyril, the words were not there; and therefore this part of the Creed, in its present form, can have no authority with diligent and impartial inquirers. As to the Creed commonly, but erroneously, called the Creed of St. Athanasius, there, doubtless, we do read that Christ descended into hell; but this Creed, however it may support the doctrine of the Trinity, is not worthy of being opposed to the more ancient Creeds.

In order to impress upon your minds more strongly the information which I have collected from the very learned and very pious Dr. Hicks, I will subjoin some pertinent extracts from a recent publication in our own country. You must have heard that Mr. Justice Bayley is much respected, not only for his knowledge of the laws, but for his zeal in religion. Hear now what he says of the Apostles' Creed—"It is not to be understood that this Creed was framed by the Apostles, or indeed existed as a Creed in their times." And after giving the Creed as it existed in the year 600, and which is here copied from his Common Prayer-book, he says, "how long this existed before the year 600 is not exactly known; the additions were probably made in opposition to particular heresies and errors."

The most important "addition" since the year 600 is that which affirms that Christ descended into hell. This has been proved not only to have been an invention after the Apostles' times, but even after

the time of Eusebius. Bishop Pearson says, "that the descent into hell was not in the ancient Creeds or rules of faith. It is not found in the rules of faith delivered by Irenæus, by Origen, or by Tertullian. It is not expressed in those Creeds which were made by the councils, as larger explications of the Apostles' Creed, nor in the Nicene, or Constantinopolitan, nor in that of Ephesus or Chalcedon; nor in those confessions made at Sardica, Antioch, Seleucia, Sermium, &c. It is not mentioned in several confessions of faith delivered by particular persons; not in that of Eusebius Cæsariensis, presented to the council of Nice; not in that of Marcellus, Bishop of Ancyra, delivered to Pope Julius; not in that of Arius and Euroius, presented to Constantine; not in that of Acacius, Bishop of Cæsaræn, delivered unto the synod of Seleucia; not in that of Eustathius, Theophilus, and Silvanus, sent to Liberius. There is no mention of it in the Creed of St. Basil; in the Creed of Epiphanius, Gelasius, Damasus, Macarius, &c. It is not in the Creed expounded by St. Cyril (though some have produced that Creed to prove it). It is not in the Creed expounded by St. Augustine, nor in that other attributed to St. Augustine in another place; nor in that expounded by Maximus Taurinensis; nor in that so often interpreted by Petrus Chrysologus; nor in that of the Church of Antioch, delivered by Cassianus. Neither is it to be seen in the MSS. Creeds set forth by the learned Archbishop of Armagh. It is affirmed by Ruffinus, "that in his time it was neither in the Roman nor the Oriental Creeds."

But further, you have heard from me and others, that for the descent of Christ into hell there is not clear and solid proof in Holy Writ. You have heard too, that for more than six centuries it was not an article in any Creed. You have heard that in number and authority, the Creeds which are silent upon the facts exceed those in which the mention of it is inserted. And finally, you have heard that the two great fathers of the church, Tertullian and Irenæus, however earnest in defending, and however copious in explaining their own faith, yet give not the slightest intimation of the persuasion that Christ, while his body was in the grave, went down into hell for the purpose of preaching there to wicked spirits. I will not however conceal from you, that there is a book in which it is positively asserted, and dwelt upon largely. The book, which I have in view, is the gospel ascribed to Nicodemus; and as, by the consent of all learned men, the work is spurious, I should imagine that the advocates for the common opinion will not much rely for the success of their cause upon such a witness. The writer of the gospel employs four or five chapters upon the subject. In the 15th chapter there is a long and angry quarrel between Satan and the Prince of Hell, concerning the expected arrival of Christ in hell. In the 16th chapter, "While there was a voice of thunderings, and rushing of winds, Christ arrives at the gate of hell. Here the greatest confusion arises, and the gates of brass, and the bars of iron are cut asunder; and while David is speaking reverentially unto Christ, he descends into hell."

In the 17th chapter we read, "That Death and the devils were in great horror at Christ's coming; that he trampled upon Death; that he seized the Prince of Hell, and took Adam with him into heaven." In the 18th chapter we find, "That Beelzebub, Prince of Hell, vehemently upbraided Satan for persecuting and bringing him to their dark abode, and that Christ gave to Beelzebub dominion over Satan for ever, as a recompense for taking away Adam and his sons," who, it should seem, were in hell. In the 19th chapter we read, "That Christ took Adam by the hand; that all the saints were joined together for the power of the Most High, and that they all ascended with him into Paradise." Such is the representation of the subject in the Gospel of Nicodemus, and instead of the dignified plainness, the inartificial exactness, the occasional minuteness without prolixity, and the occasional solemnity without obscurity, which adorn the gospels, we meet only with wild imagery or chimerical descriptions. We have a series of ludicrous wranglings, tumultuous and unedifying effusions of piety, and narratives here romantic without ingenuity, and there puerile without simplicity. Facts previously admitted acquire no increase of credibility; and facts, upon which men would have doubted, become more doubtful from the outrageous extravagance, and ostentatious amplification with which they are related.

You and I, my brethren, may gratify our curiosity, and take our chance of meeting with tales, some to amuse and some to disgust us, in the Gos-

pel of Nicodemus, but we shall not suffer it to lead us astray from our well-founded and sincere belief in the sacred records of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I thought it my duty to lay before you such statements as are not often heard in Christian congregations, and your good sense will tell you how scanty is the evidence of the Descent into Hell, when compared to the opposite testimony of omission. I have often wished that, by the authority of our venerable church, the word was altered in the Apostles' Creed. When repeating that Creed I sometimes used the printed word, but I occasionally used, and shall continue to use the word Hades, and, without pronouncing any positive opinion, I leave my hearers to their own interpretation. As to the scriptural evidence, it is laid before you clearly, fairly, and fully, in the sermon written by Dr. Clarke, a most sagacious, learned, and pious member of our church. I lately read to you that sermon, and I am bound to state that, after diligent and serious inquiry, I hold with Dr. Clarke that according to the Scriptures we are to believe the descent of Christ to have been not into the receptacle of damned spirits, but into the grave, the common repository of all who die, whether they be good or bad. This view of the subject leaves room for the glorious resurrection of our Redeemer; and in that resurrection we have a bright, instructive, and animating proof of our own. Here is abundant room for our faith, and our meditations; and by them we shall be led safety to the practice of all Christian virtues, and to cherish the humble,

yet earnest hope of our own salvation in the life to come. We, my brethren, like Christ, must go down into the grave. We shall not, indeed, like him be raised from the dead miraculously upon the third day, but by the omnipotence of God, and at a time, and in a manner seeming fit to his omniscience. And earnest is my prayer, that all you who now hear me may, through the promised mercy of the Deity, be placed in a state of everlasting happiness.

# SERMON XXXV.

ON RESOLUTION.

## 1 Corinthians xvi. 13.

*Watch ye; stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong.*

In this discourse I shall first explain to you the metaphorical phraseology which the Apostle uses in my text, and then proceed to enforce the instruction contained in it.

The writings of St. Paul are highly esteemed by learned men, not only for the vigour of his diction, and the cogency of his arguments, but for the frequent and marked felicity of his allusion to local circumstances. With consummate judgment he endeavours to captivate the imagination of his converts by the glowing colours of figurative language, employed upon subjects that were more familiar and more dear to them. Thus, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, he adverts very successfully to the temple of Diana, which was the magnificent ornament of their city, and speaks of *edification*—a term quite as little understood in criticism by the greater part of our evangelical preachers, as the thing which it was meant to express is understood in theology by them. Accordingly, he tells them,

the saints as a body are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets—Jesus Christ being himself the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth up into a holy temple of the Lord, and becomes an habitation of God through the spirit. In the same train of imagery, he exhorts his Ephesian followers, that speaking the truth in love, they may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, or whole building, with the edifying of itself in love. Here, you see, is a profusion of architectural language, which derives peculiar lustre from the famous temple of Diana, which in length was four hundred and twenty-five Roman feet, in breadth two hundred and twenty, and supported by one hundred and twenty-seven marble columns.

In the same Epistle to the Ephesians there is another allusion, which cannot be understood by those who depend on our English version, or indeed upon the general appearance of the Greek text itself, in which there is not merely obscurity, but even contradiction; for thus you read, "that you may be enabled to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." Now as these words stand, you are called upon to comprehend the length, depth, height, and breadth of *nothing*, and to comprehend also the love of

Christ, which you are told in the same sentence surpasses knowledge — that is, cannot be comprehended. But all obscurity, and all contradiction, have been happily removed by the critical conjecture of a learned English Prelate, who does not alter a single letter, who transposes only one word, with the article prefixed to it, and who assigns to another word the sense which it often bears in writers, sacred and profane. Thus you must understand the passage—that you may comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of knowledge—which in St. Paul's writings often and peculiarly means religious knowledge—and the exceeding love of Christ. Here, then, we find the correctness and perspicuity of St. Paul's language, and we see moreover the beauty of it, in the allusion which, addressing Ephesian converts, he deliberately and judiciously made to the breadth and length, and the depth and the height of that sacred edifice, which they were wont to frequent and to venerate.

Again, when writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul avails himself of such customs as were well known to them, and much endeared to them; for in the city of Corinth every third, or fifth year were celebrated the Isthmian games, in which the victors were crowned with garlands, sometimes of pine-leaves, and sometimes of parsley, and the contentions were in boxing, wrestling, throwing the javelin or the quoit, the foot-race, and the chariot-race. To one or other of these far-famed contests St. Paul occasionally refers in the Epistle whence my

text is taken. For the sake, however, of my audience, I must here premise some cautionary distinctions. The agonistical exhibitions of antiquity, to which St. Paul adverts, must not be confounded with racing and pugilism, such as they exist in our own country, and in our own days. At one of these popular diversions the high and low, the industrious and idle, crowd together from venial curiosity to gaze upon trials of fleetness, where success does not bestow upon the winner any additional respectability in society. The other is, I believe, frequented chiefly by a vulgar and tumultuous rabble of vagrants, drunkards, ruffian brawlers, and gambling desperadoes. But the spectators of Corinth were multitudes of free-born citizens, accustomed to contemplate the glory of their country as implicated in the splendour of their games, and attended by many distinguished inhabitants from many other celebrated cities in Greece, remote and near, by renowned artists in painting and sculpture, by poets, by sages, by the ministers of justice, by the rulers of states, by heroes, and by patriots. From feats of valour, then, or skill, or swiftness, or strength, displayed before such intelligent and dignified beholders, the Apostle might with great propriety, as in truth he did with great effect, borrow ornamental illustrations of his meaning upon the lofty and momentous subjects even of religion itself.

Hence, when describing the day of judgment, he says, "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised up." Now to a Corinthian reader the grandeur of this language must be very perceptible,

and very expressive, because it brought to his mind the loud blast of the trumpet which sounded at the Corinthian games, when the chariots instantaneously burst from the barrier, and impetuously rushed towards the goal. The suddenness of the resurrection could not have been described in words more luminous.

In another chapter, the Apostle refers to the race and the boxing, and to the respective prizes. "Know ye not," says he, "that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." Let me ask then the man of learning, or the man of taste, was it possible for the Apostle to find more appropriate or more significant terms, in writing to the Corinthians, if he wished to delineate the superior necessity of abstinence in the preparatory discipline of a spiritual combatant, or the superior value of immortality to a perishable chaplet, as the meed of a spiritual conqueror?

Having heard St. Paul's eloquent exhortations to his converts, now attend to the animated phraseology in which he speaks of himself. "I therefore so run," saith he, "not as uncertainly." By which we may understand, with some commentators, not as to an uncertain goal — or, with others, not without attending to the prescribed marks or line for the direction of the races—or, according to a third interpretation, which I prefer, not without being

placed within the view of the spectators and umpires of the race. The Apostle thus proceeds: "So fight I," or, as the Greek word may be more properly rendered, "so box I, not as one that beateth the air." The passage here recited to you alludes, as do the words of the text, to the struggles of boxers. St. Paul says of himself, that he did not waste his blows in the air, but aimed them at their proper object, so as to secure for himself victory.

In the text, which immediately follows, he exhorts his converts to employ all those expedients that are necessary for their success in the many and arduous struggles they are to make for the salvation of their souls. He exhorts them "to watch, to stand fast in the faith, to quit themselves like men, to be strong." And for those reiterated and earnest admonitions there was abundant need, for the Corinthians were in danger of being drawn aside in their faith by many artful and mischievous teachers — they were in danger of being corrupted in their practice by the example of their countrymen, whose licentiousness was so foul and so notorious as to give occasion for a Greek word by which is meant that to act like a Corinthian is to act like a sensualist—they were in danger of being alienated, through fear, from belief in their crucified Master, by the unjust and severe persecution which threatened his followers. In order, then, to preserve them from these various perils, St. Paul concisely and energetically says — "watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

After this explanation of the text, the remaining

part of my discourse will be employed in enforcing the instruction given by the Apostle. The general result of my remarks upon it will be this.

Clearly to discern, and steadily to pursue what is right, are qualities essential to the formation of a completely Christian character. Even good affections, unless guided by a sound judgment, not only subject us to trying inconveniences, but betray us into gross inconsistencies. On the other hand, however keen be our penetration, and however correct our opinions, the want of resolution prevents any beneficial effect, and causes us either to languish in inactivity, or to act occasionally with guilt. Doubtless we frequently meet with an undue stiffness in some men in pursuing what they have once determined to do; and by superficial observers, that stiffness is mistaken for a meritorious kind of courage. Yet concerning men of this description, it may be remarked, that they are very eager in following the caprices of humour, and the extravagances of passion, and very slow in regarding sage and salutary counsel. They seldom lay out that circumspection upon the first resolution, and therefore in abiding by it, they eventually add sin to error. The most judicious reasoning, the most correct expostulation, and the most affectionate advice, are laid before them to no purpose. They conduct themselves as if immutability were indiscriminately and universally a perfection of human nature; and such it unquestionably would be, if infallibility were what it evidently is not, a property belonging to that nature. They think it a glory not to change a

determination once formed and avowed, though the reasons upon which it is founded be ever so unsound, and the probable consequences to which it tends ever so injurious. Never to give up an opinion once embraced—never to relax a resolution once taken—these, my brethren, were indeed the boasts of certain heathen philosophers, whose strange paradoxes have been recorded and exposed by two distinguished writers of antiquity. But such language, and such a spirit, even if they were venial in a Stoic, are most dangerous in every man, who professes to bow the knee in the name of Jesus Christ. Weak and frail, as we all are in our judgments, we subject ourselves to innumerable evils from fancy and humour, from our early prejudices, and unruly appetites, from the absurd customs, and the contagious vices of the world in which we live—and shall we make a merit then of persisting in the notions, or the determinations, or even the wishes, which are suggested to our minds in a situation so replete with danger? "Happy," says Solomon, "is the man, who feareth always—that is, the man, who startles at possible consequences, and provides against the unknown—the man, who is jealous of himself, and alarmed at the remembrance of his own fallibility and his own infirmity—the man who, instead of relying upon himself solely and invariably, desires the advice of the wise, and the assistance of the good—the man who pauses before he ventures to stake his honour or his innocence in this life, and his salvation in the life to come." On the contrary, "he that hardeneth his heart," says Solomon, "shall fall into

mischief." Indeed, it is scarcely possible, that he who affects to set himself above instruction—he who depends implicitly and indiscriminately upon his own understanding—he who consults his desires and his humours, instead of appealing even to that understanding itself, should pass through existence without the foulest stains and the most piercing sorrows.

In points of faith, as well as of practice, this stubbornness, mingled as it always is with pride, seems very inconsistent with the character of a true Christian. Have I not, exclaims the Calvinist, from my earliest infancy been taught to hold the doctrine of reprobation and election? Do I not conceive that doctrine necessary to display the true glory of God; and when you press me with arguments drawn from known conceptions of his justice and his clemency, shall I listen to them in opposition to the peremptory language of an inspired apostle upon the irresistible power of God as exercised according to his own infallible wisdom, his own uncontrolable will, his own unimpeachable holiness, and his own inscrutable purposes? Let not my piety be shocked by your philosophical harangues upon the divine attributes, or your perverted interpretation of scriptural terms concerning the merits of works, as the subjects of future reward. Tush, says the sceptic, from the opposite quarter, away with your showy panegyrics and solemn sophistry upon the excellence and necessity of revelation. I have, for many years, explored the works of God, and in them I have such a view of

his perfections, and his dispensations, as must ever prevent me from adopting Christianity as the word of God. Let not my understanding be insulted by reasonings adapted only to the visions of the mystic, or the terrors of the superstitious. I have contrived to live, and I am resolved to die in the disbelief of tenets so little worthy of reception from men who are capable of impartial and profound research into the constitution of the moral world. Thus similar, you see, is, not indeed the language, but the spirit of obstinacy, mistaken for constancy, as it actuates the gloomy Calvinist and the hardy infidel. Each stands fast by inveterate professions, which investigation might lead him to qualify or to retract. Each betrays weakness, where he bears most confidently upon his own strength. Neither will submit to take St. Paul for his guide into a happy medium between the lubricity of the changeling and the pertinacity of the bigot.

If we direct our attention from the faith of men to their actions, we shall find that obstinacy at once more hateful and more ridiculous, because it is often united with great laziness and great inconsistency. Under the influence of that laziness, mixed as it sometimes is with lurking conceit, you will listen to no reason opposed to your resolutions—you will suffer no persuasion to induce you either to examine or abandon it; and then all on a sudden you will rush into an opposite conduct—opposite, remember, but equally unwarrantable in itself, and in its tendencies equally fatal.

Such no doubt will ever be the case, because it is

not reason, but passion and imagination, by which you are guided; and when you reflect on the numberless errors and sins, which in such a condition must be committed, little cause will you have for continuing in that state of self-confidence and self-admiration, which the spirit of intrepidity is apt to excite. Sure indeed I am, that to such a man distrust and humility would be more becoming and more safe.

But further—there is a disposition, in some respects, the reverse of what I have been describing to you, and at the same time very deplorable. Men there are who, in matters of doctrine, suffer themselves to be carried away by every idle blast—who catch at this or that opinion, because it has the gloss of novelty—who are seduced from the sound form of religion by artful or violent fanatics, recommending their own peculiar dogmas upon the ground of superior sanctity in the teacher and the taught; and while from one part of human infirmity, in the precipitation with which such notions have been once embraced, we have another instance of the same infirmity manifested in the pertinacity with which they are retained. These misguided men are watchful indeed against the smallest encroachments of common-sense. They stand fast in opposing assumption to argument, and ideal experiences to the general moral sentiments and habits of their fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians. They quit themselves like dogmatists too illuminated to be instructed, and like zealots too impetuous to be restrained. They are strong in contending for the

new and mystical sense which has been affixed to the technical or polemical phraseology of an Apostle, who not only wrote in an ancient language, but in forms of it considerably, I do not say, disfigured, but obscured by the intermingled idioms of two other ancient languages, and in whose epistles are some things which, in the earliest ages were hard to be understood, and which the illiterate and unstable of St. Paul's contemporaries wrested, as they did other parts of Scripture from other sacred writers to their own destruction. They call it humility to reject the proffered aids of learning; and they give themselves credit for saving grace, when, with sincerity, as well as fervor, they spurn the beggarly elements of good works. But this train of evils arises from the proneness of the illiterate and the inconsiderate to change the better tenets in which they were once educated, and in their readiness to pass from one paradox to another, if it be loudly praised, and vehemently enforced by a favourite pastor.

To a man of reflection, very humiliating, and yet very instructive, is the view which such a case presents of human frailty through the progress of its transactions to the close of its career, when the appeal is made to feeling not to reason, in supplying the only sure criteria of a right faith. Fondness for novelty engenders at first versatility in belief; that versatility is followed by ambition of singularity; that ambition is increased by sympathy with other men, whom we consider not as rivals, but associates in the common pursuit of spiritual distinction from

the bulk of mankind. By the co-operation of these causes pride and fanaticism gradually gain an entire ascendancy over the affections and the judgment, which soon becomes ductile to them, and by various progressions they ultimately produce an inveterate and invincible rigidity in opinion, a contemptuous aversion to farther inquiry, a restless impatience of dissent however modest, and discussion however sober. Most assuredly such a state of mind has no encouragement from Scripture, where we are directed to prove all things, and cleave to that which after such proof is perceived to be good—to be on the watch against rash and deceitful teachers—to stand fast in the sound form of doctrine once delivered to true believers—to quit ourselves like men who disdain to be the blind followers of blind guides—to be strong in resisting every attempt to seduce us from those simple and sublime truths which are alike approved by reason, and sanctioned by Revelation.

If from the religious opinions we turn towards the practice of mankind, we meet with persons who easily bend to importunity, who open their ears to every adviser, and who suffer themselves at one moment to be flattered, and at another to be terrified into measures which, upon sober reflection, they could hardly fail to condemn. This instability is sometimes to be seen even in men, who, on many points, have clear understandings, and in whom the fruits of good sense and honesty are blasted by their want of courage to persevere in that course of which they once approved. Thus, my brethren, you may enter upon life firmly persuaded that it is your duty

and your interest to do the will of God; some unforeseen and unpleasant difficulty in the affairs of the world arrests you, and you suffer yourselves from momentary hope, or momentary fear, to swerve from that will. Under some circumstances, I confess, we may lament rather than despise such frailty; but it well behoves you to beware, for if you happen to be of a resolved and constant spirit upon all other occasions, and if in matters of religion you are pliant and unstable, do not deceive yourselves. The apparent weakness may be in the head. But the consequence of that weakness long indulged will often be a latent and progressive corruption in the heart. Yes, my brethren, if you do not watch against such corruption, and strive to subdue it, you will gradually contract evil habits, and then you will be drawn into a situation the very opposite to instability. You will imperceptibly learn to prefer evil to good; you will at last become insensible to the promises, and incorrigible by the threats of religion itself. Are not young men led astray by evil company into practices, at the mere mention of which they shuddered in the innocent days of their boyhood? Do they not, in time, proceed from one act of wickedness to another, without the immediate instigation of profligate companions? Do not they, who in their youth might plead that they have been drawn aside by the wicked counsels of their acquaintance, become in their turn the corrupters of the rising generation? Do they not represent it as unnecessary for men to watch—as too laborious for men to stand fast in the faith—as mistaken and mis-

spent courage to stand like men in resisting their passions—as real weakness to be strong in contending with the allurements of the flesh and the world? Such is often the end of those who, from the original constitution of their minds, or from acquired habits, suffer themselves to be led aside from duty. But where the guilt of mankind is not thus complicated, still the want of vigilance, and the want of firmness will disqualify them for arduous exertions in the course of virtue. Self-examination, self-denial, self-command, cannot be practised without great circumspection upon the approach of danger, great firmness on its arrival, and great circumspection combined with great firmness to prevent its return.

Whether you remember what has been passing in your own lives, or look to the motives and actions of other persons, you will see the propriety of the Apostles' injunctions for you to quit yourselves like men. It may require, I grant, unwearied diligence, and unremitted caution to follow that course. But perseverance in right will not be less effectual for your good, than perseverance in wrong for your evil. The desire of quitting yourselves like men, accompanied by correspondent endeavours, will enable you to prevail over all the obstacles which may impede, and all the inconveniences which may annoy you, in your passage from time to eternity. You will have the noble consciousness of acting well in every step which carries you forward towards heaven. In every conquest you make over your inordinate affections—in every renunciation of temporal advantage for the sake of the high prize that is set before you, there

will be not only a distinct and vivid remembrance, but a strong and triumphant feeling of your progress in righteousness. That you should at any time have fallen (and who among the sons of Adam does not sometimes fall?) will, in such a frame of mind, enable you to rise again with redoubled vigour. Peter, you have read, in a sudden moment of cowardice, denied his Master. Peter quickly repented. Peter returned to his duty with renovated alacrity and zeal. He then stood fast in the faith; he quitted himself like a man, and for the honour of his dying Master he was strong in defiance of every danger to his repose, his comfort, and even his existence.

Let us now consider the most effectual methods of avoiding such mischiefs as result from that pliancy, which in this discourse I have so pointedly, and, let me add, so justly condemned. The first and the most obvious expedient is for you to withdraw yourselves from temptation; and let me affectionately and earnestly entreat every young man who hears me not to trifle with my well-meant counsel. Now if, with the kind of reflection which plain common-sense will enable every one of you to employ, you should be conscious of any particular weakness, tell me, I beseech you, is it not infatuation for you to throw yourselves within the reach of trials which it may often require the greatest fortitude to surmount? If you be, as young men with ingenuous tempers sometimes are, of an easy and unresisting nature, ought you not to shun such company as will tempt you to laziness, or to profaneness, or

to debauchery, or to dishonesty—company, in which if you were of a modest and sober disposition, you will now and then be derided for your singularities—company, which may insensibly lay hold of your good-will, and then in order to screen yourselves from the unmerited and galling taunts of your associates, you will at last be presumptuous enough to incur the displeasure even of your God. Young men, if it be not your principal aim to secure your innocence, you can have no plea from bad advice, because you were forewarned of it, and still are secretly inclined to follow it. But when you find that certain opportunities, and certain conversations, and certain examples overcome your virtuous resolutions, why will you hover on the brink of your danger? Why do you not show your firmness, as well as your prudence, in a timely retreat? Whether young or old, whether we inhabit the glittering palace or the homely cottage, whether we reside in the bustling city or the retired village, we all of us have some inward weaknesses, some ruling passion against which we ought to be upon our guard. But he that, having failed once, deliberately throws himself into the way of failing again, can have no plausible apology for what he calls the infirmity of his nature. Let me deal with you very plainly, for I am speaking to you very truly. Even your harmless amusements, which I condemn not—your necessary business which I commend—your daily avocations will sometimes expose you to the sight of objects that allure you, and to the hearing of conversation that may delude or deprave you. Is it not

enough then to encounter other dangers, which come upon you inevitably—or will you make those objects and those conversations matters of cool and deliberate choice? Believe me, it is far easier for you to avoid the snare than to disengage yourselves from it, when negligently or perversely you have permitted yourselves to be caught in it.

In the second place, keep your minds under the influence of moral and religious truths; and this you may do sufficiently by attending the public worship of your Maker, by pouring forth private devotions when you repose upon your pillow by night, or in the morning rise to your honest labour, and by occasionally reading with seriousness the holy word of God. Let me assure you, that we have all of us a wonderful, though often an unperceived power over our own opinion. Men are to be found whose views of things are entirely changed by the method in which they meditate upon them. Many of you, for instance, begin with thinking laziness the root nearly of all evil — with believing prayers and thanksgivings in the sanctuary to be a reasonable service—with dreading the effects of sottish drunkenness and unblushing libertinism upon your health, and character, and future happiness. But if you have again and again failed to quit yourselves like men, the chances are, that single irregularities will terminate in habit, that levity will pass into presumption, and that the whole strength of your judgment, warped by the sorceries of your corrupt inclinations, will be thrown on the side of vice. You will then be on the watch against every un-

welcome and secret whisper of self-condemnation—you will stand fast in defending the new tenets which you have adopted—you will be active champions in resisting the old opinions which you have determined to reject — you will begin to ridicule diligence as a debasing and burthensome drudgery—you will venture to turn religion itself into a subject of mockery — instead of seeing any merit in striving against your carnal affections, you will be disposed to make it your boast to be a man of what you miscall spirit in the arts of seduction, or the excesses of intoxication. They who look attentively at real life will acquit me of exaggeration in these statements, and of moroseness in these warnings. Keep therefore your imaginations and your appetites in a state of constant control. Review and correct, not only every confirmed, but every rising prejudice in favour of vice, and look with just suspicion, and even horror, upon the bad opinions and the bad habits of many who are around you. Above all, let a deep sense of Almighty God, of his glorious attributes, of his revealed will, of his future dispensations as the righteous governor in the moral world, be seated in your souls. Is he not present with you in the chamber and the field? Has he not preserved you from innumerable accidents and calamities? Can he not make you miserable or happy for ever?

To conclude,—was it by acting otherwise than I advise you to act, that the Apostles held fast the truth, or were qualified to count it all joy when they fell into divers trials? Did they make any mean and dastardly concessions to the popular opi-

nions or the corrupt customs of the world? Did they handle the Gospel deceitfully, in order to please the fastidious Athenians? Did they disguise the deformity of sensual indulgences, that they might conciliate the favour of the luxurious and licentious Corinthians? Did they explain away the precepts of their Master, that they might soften the fierceness, or soothe the pride, of the Roman magistrates by whom they were persecuted? No, surely; they were alike inflexible to the solicitations of perfidious friends, and undismayed by the menaces of their most cruel enemies; they put on the helmet of salvation; they bore in their hands the sword of faith; they were strong in the whole armour of God. But, through the gracious providence of the Deity, you are not required to engage in contests thus extensive and thus perilous. Be it so. But will you sink under the less difficulty, because you are not called upon to contend with the greater? When the ordinary temptations of life befall you, are you authorized to be negligent, or to be weak, for no other reason than that you never will have any opportunity for displaying your fidelity and your might in combating the extraordinary? Doubtless in some countries, where the Gospel is the established religion, your memory will supply you with hateful and frightful occurrences, which show that in our own days the tyranny of Christian inquisitors is not less formidable than was of old the inhumanity of heathen persecutors. Granted, too, it must be, that in the countries to which I advert, it is most difficult for human patience or human cou-

rage to stand fast in the cause of truth. But in this land of freedom civil and religious, hunger, thirst, and cold, the dungeon, the scourge, the axe, and the cross, are not parts of our moral discipline in the profession of our faith. Be it so. But are we therefore quite secure? Have we no need to be upon the watch against other dangers? In reality, my brethren, the task imposed upon every one of you, and myself, is sufficient to exercise the utmost fortitude which any of us possess; and be our situation ever so obscure, and our sphere of action ever so confined, there is abundant reason for us all to implore the assistance of the Deity, that in seasons of trial we may stand fast. Let us then be strict and firm in our attachment to virtue, because we know that the Supreme Being beholds our actions, and will not suffer our labour to be expended in vain. In order then to quit yourselves with seriousness and constancy, turn your thoughts towards that future state to which you may be summoned within one year or one day. Here a splendid and unbounded prospect lies before you; for, compared with the glory which shall be revealed hereafter, what, I beseech you, are the most enchanting pleasures, or what the most terrifying distresses, of this present state? If a solemn judgment at the bar of the Almighty, and the rewards and punishments which must instantaneously follow it, be distinctly fixed in our view, it is scarcely possible but that the most wavering sinner will at last be constant, and the most timorous become courageous. Yes, my brethren, an habitual converse with God will by de-

grees produce in you that elevation of soul which looks down without any emotion of flattering hope, or abject fear, upon all that this fleeting scene can bestow, and all that it can take away. It will enable you to feel a seasonable and instantaneous alarm when your own irregular passions, or the treacherous suggestions of your companions, would lead you to violate the commands of God. It will excite in you a spirit of vigilance, and a spirit of heroism, through all the stages of your Christian course, and in all the struggles of your Christian warfare. It will give purity and sincerity to your directions, vigour and firmness to your hope, enlargement and ardour to your charity. No earthly pleasure will decoy you from acting like men. No earthly dangers will deter you from being steady in your faith as to the genuine and hallowed doctrines of the Gospel, or being steadfast and immoveable in your practical obedience to the Lord.

# SERMON XXXVI.*

ON PRIVATE PRAYER.

## MATTHEW xiv. 23.

*He went up into a mountain apart to pray.*

THE judgments of men have in all ages been distracted, and their morals, I fear, injured by impertinent and invidious comparisons. Objects which are only distinct from each other have been represented as contrary and incompatible, and their value, which changes with the circumstances of particular men, has been absurdly calculated from general rules and theoretic principles. Hence the idle debates that have been agitated, sometimes by the visionary philosopher, and sometimes by the melancholy recluse, on the comparative excellence of speculative and practical life, and of the social or solitary. Yet common sense will surely tell us, that speculation, unless coupled with practice, may confer intellectual superiority, but cannot imply any moral merit; and we may learn from the same director, that if the temptations to vice be in a social state many, the opportunities for virtue in a solitary one are few.

* 1786.

Let us not then deceive or torment ourselves with these senseless or fruitless researches. Let us not separate what ought to be united, or place those duties in a state of artificial hostility to each other which have a natural tendency to confer and to receive mutual advantage.

He that contemplates virtue most frequently is likely to practise it most successfully. He that retires from the world to examine his heart in silence and solitude, will return into action with purer principles and calmer passions. The Saviour of the world ascended up into a mountain to pray; but it is also recorded of him, that he went about constantly doing good. He dismissed the multitude, that he might discharge his duty towards God; but he did not dismiss them till he had taught and relieved them. In the whole course of the Sacred History you will find our Saviour's life a mixture of contemplation and action, of exemplary exactness that does not offend our good sense, and amiable freedom that does not relax our virtue. You meet him in the market-place, the synagogue, and the festal entertainment. You learn also that he withdrew himself from the crowd into deserts, or a mountain, or a garden—that he there held immediate intercourse with the great Father of Spirits, and employed himself in meditation, in fasting, and in prayer.

And here it may not be amiss to inform you, that for the accommodation of travellers, or of those who lived at a distance from great towns, many places, called Proseuchæ, were erected in

Judea, to which persons, who were devoutly disposed, might betake themselves, and offer their addresses to Almighty God without rude interruption. Upon a principle not very dissimilar from this, crucifixes are erected near the highway in Popish countries; and if some offensive circumstances tending towards idolatry were happily removed, the opportunities and encouragement offered to prayer are highly meritorious, and deserve not only to be praised, but imitated among ourselves. A distinction is to be made between monastic retirement and frequent devotion. The one is not commanded, and seems unfit for us with our social feelings, and in all our social relations. But to pray must ever be our duty, and is in our power ever. Even when plunged in the business of the world—when annoyed by its cares—when charmed with its very pleasures, a truly good man will sometimes elevate his thoughts to heaven. He may not prostrate himself on his knees, or spread forth his hands, or observe any regular forms of supplication; but sentiments of reverence, affection, and confidence, and gratitude rise within his bosom; and he will give vent to them in a concise and fervent address to him who measures our piety not by the length, or number, or loudness of our prayers, but by the sincerity of the motives from which they proceed.

It must however be owned, that when we reflect on the majesty of Almighty God, and on our own extreme frailty, even this good work will be performed with more steady recollection, with greater propriety, and greater fervour, in the stillness of our

closets than amidst the tumults of this restless world, and the glare of those alluring objects which solicit our senses on every side. As the text has often been wrested to support the wild and fantastic cause of those who contend for the necessity of religious retirement, I shall consider the real nature and extent of it as a duty. Aware I am well, that questions of this kind have not often reached your ears; but in the solemn and imposing garb of superstition such doctrines may not be totally unknown to you; and therefore, for two reasons, it will not be improper for me to guard my text from gross misconceptions. The first is, that while you perform diligently and faithfully the offices of your various stations—while you provide for the comfort of your children, and your own decent support—while you are good husbandmen, good servants, and good masters of families, you may not be discouraged by any idle fears, that you are not serving God. The next is, that however laudable such pursuits may be, you must not suffer them to engross your whole attention; for in those seasons when the laws of your country, or the customs of the world, permit you to have intervals of leisure, you will do well to employ that leisure in serious meditation, in examining your past conduct, and in preparing for the improvement of whatever is right in it, and the amendment of whatever is amiss. I need not dissuade you from the austerities of the hermit; but there may be great use in rousing you from the lethargy of the worldling, whether he be a rapacious miser, a listless trifler, or a thoughtless, hardened debauchee.

Now I confess myself at a loss to conceive what countenance the advocate of solitude can borrow from the Sacred Writings. Of Moses, of Samuel, of Daniel, and the Prophets, we find that they were employed in active life, and many of them held very arduous and important offices in the Jewish state. They were engaged in the founding of states, the building of cities, the operations of war, and the intricacies of politics, and the ceaseless toils of government, and the cultivation of wastes. To the example of these holy men may be opposed the conduct of John, who lived in the wilderness, where he fed on locusts and wild honey, and where the coarseness of his dress was adapted to the abstemiousness of his diet. But the particular purpose for which he came into the world, as the precursor of the great Messiah, may account in some measure for this striking singularity. Add to this, that he professedly came in the spirit of Elias; and therefore to preserve a consistency of character he shunned the amusements and the business of the world, avowedly and indiscriminately. But this behaviour, conformable as it was to the station he held, and to the ideas the Jews entertained of the second Elias, is not to be applauded as a model for the generality even of the Jews themselves. Yet less can it be a matter of obligation to us, who live under the easy yoke of Christiany, the social spirit of which is not compatible with such a plan of conduct, and the letter of which, I am confident, no where prescribes it in direct terms, or by fair implication. Be it observed, too, that John himself did not hold up his own example

for the imitation of the people. When asked by them, what they should do to flee from the wrath to come, what was his answer? That they should abandon their houses, their occupations, and their families? That they should retire to the shaggy mountain and the gloomy wilderness? No; it was a series of plain and salutary precepts adapted to their several callings, and calculated to make them worthy members of the community to which they belonged.

Now in our Saviour's life, as I before observed, we see no traces of rigorous mortification, or assumed melancholy—no peevish opposition to harmless pleasure—no haughty contempt of useful business. His discourses were spent in pressing men to exercise those graces which adorn the social state. The active, and even the passive courage which he recommended, could not be exercised in a desert; and accordingly you find that the Apostles themselves did not sequester themselves from mankind, but mingled with men of all nations, and of all religions—of all ranks and of all ages—with the elegant Athenian, and the haughty Roman, and the fierce Scythian—with Alexander the coppersmith, and Festus the governor. From their illustrious example no argument can be drawn to justify that solitary and austere way of life, in which the mistaken zeal, or the sombrous temper of many well-meaning Christians, has induced them to place the highest perfection. Let us leave these visionary and useless plans of serving God to oriental devotees—to the dronish Bramin, and the superstitious Dervise. As Christians we have a nobler and ampler field opened

to us for the display of our virtue, and for the exercise of our noblest faculties on the most important objects. But you will take care not to misapprehend my meaning. I am not letting you loose into the world, on the supposition you have a privilege to act there, as if this were the whole of your existence; and to say the truth, it is rather upon the rejection than the belief of another life, that the best arguments can be founded for solitude. When we see the prosperity of the wicked, and the sufferings of the virtuous—when we reflect on the heavy evils and the sharp disappointments of the world—when we see the snares that are laid by the cunning for the well-meaning, and the cruelties that are exercised by the strong against the defenceless—when we recollect that all these irregularities are never to be rectified by future and more exact retribution, and that our own uprightness and innocence is neither a shield of defence to us here, nor a ground of hope hereafter—then it would not be strange if men of feeling hearts and cultivated understandings should give way to disgust and fretfulness, and retreat from a scene of confusion in which there was so little chance for them to support their dignity, or preserve their tranquillity. They would retire, not to pray, but to lament that prayer was useless.

But the prospects of the Christian are far brighter, and he knows that by sustaining a proper part in society he does not disqualify himself for communion with God in this life by meditation, or in a better by immediate admission into the presence of the Most High. But how will he be most able to

sustain that part? Must he give up his whole mind to temporal affairs? Must he never look onward to a state that is to succeed his dissolution? Must his thoughts never be thrown back on his own conduct, and his eyes never raised to the throne of Heaven? No, surely. For in proportion as he sincerely feels the truth and importance of religion, he will be able so to use the good things of this world as not to abuse them—so to taste of pleasure as not to be intoxicated with it—so to labour for the honest acquisition of wealth, that he may not set his whole affection upon that which he cannot carry into his grave, and which thieves, before he is summoned to eternity, may break through and steal.

Let me put home to you these plain questions, and weigh them well, that you may not now lull asleep your consciences by excuses, which cannot avail you in the last day. Business, you say, is too oppressive, or pleasure too enchanting, to leave room for the intrusion of serious reflection, or the use even of momentary devotion. If the plea were true, business and pleasure ought for this reason to be abandoned; but I know it to be false. In the quieter and more sedentary employments, is it impossible, think you, for the artificer at the loom to snatch a few moments for the service of his God? From his manual task certainly his thoughts and his conversation will stray, and is religion the only mark to which they never point? The argument goes on to yourselves, whose occupations wholly lie in the healthy and invigorating operations of agriculture. And consider, now—did one day ever pass

—do even many hours ever run on in succession, in the course of which, however intense your labour, however eager your zeal, however important your task—I say, did one day, and I had almost said one hour ever pass, in which your whole mind was taken up solely with the business immediately before you? And why then is your God in Heaven the only subject on whom you never reflect—especially among scenes where the verdure of the grove, the rich embroidery of the fields, the serenity of the sky, and the splendour and genial warmth of the sun, every instant spread before your eyes such bright marks of his wisdom and goodness? That you should pray, it is not necessary for you to go up in the mountain; for in the fields you are surrounded by ten thousand objects, which ought to awaken your attention, and induce you to pour forth your praises to him, by whom they are made.

It must, however, be allowed, that in the general course of things, and by a long intercourse with the world, our hope languishes and our devotion cools—a sort of hardness and numbness gradually gathers upon our whole minds. But in order to prevent these effects, which grow more and more dangerous every day, it is in our power, all of us, sometimes to make voluntary efforts of recollection, and to call up our dissipated thoughts to that state which, whether we prepare for its approach or not, is advancing nearer and nearer, and assuredly will bring on a change most awful and most interesting to our immortal souls. You can break through the common order of your temporal business to bend the force

of your thoughts on some temporal project, which you conceive accompanied by extraordinary difficulties, or productive of essential advantages.

In the same manner you can sometimes call up resolution to step aside from the flowery paths of gaiety and voluptuousness, and to endure the rugged feelings of austerity and toil; and why then, upon questions so very important as those of religion, do you imagine that they, and they only, can be dispatched with ease, taken up in any moment you please, and treated in any way you please? Or, let me rather ask, why is the chamber, in which you are to commune with yourself, terrible to you? And why is solitude a burden? Not merely because they interrupt our favourite pursuits of wealth or pleasure, but because they would lay us open too closely to ourselves—show us our real danger, and our real faults, and convince us of what we already suspect, that the season of reformation is come, and must not be neglected. Be it so. That danger is however increased, and those faults become incorrigible, if we never have courage and diligence enough to chase away that busy swarm of vain and deceitful images, which hover around us, and to collect and purify those scattered desires, which rove after the fleeting concerns of this vain, unsatisfactory, and perishable life. Even the best of us, God knows, are too much immersed in its cares, and too fondly attached to its amusements. We are delivered over from one folly to another, and from one pursuit to another, eager to snatch the treasure, which may soon be wrested from us; or rioting in enjoyments,

which we blush to remember. We are in danger from peculiar temptation to wickedness in every age —amidst every condition, in every kind of occupation, and in every degree of amusement. We are in danger from the contagion of evil example, from the impressions suddenly made upon us when we are off our guard in the agitations and competitions of social life, and from a variety of opportunities for sin and incitements to it, when the number and nearness of objects affect us strongly. Hence then arises the absolute necessity of our leaving the multitude sometimes, to give up ourselves to the solemnities and the severities of self-examination, and the awful stillness of religious contemplation. But, be assured, I mean this to be, not a lasting but a temporary and occasional retreat—which we may at will, and on just occasions, resume or relinquish—which is consistent with the innocent enjoyments and necessary engagements of our different stations—and which, so far from injuring our duties in secular affairs, enables us to discharge them with more propriety, and I will add, with more facility and more vigour.

In these seasons of retirement you will find many great and valuable opportunities for trimming your lamps, which the public theatre of the world affords you not. Here are no flatterers to deceive, no enemies to intimidate; but you by serious and resolute inquiries know yourselves even as by your Almighty Judge you are known. Here you may trace out all the secret sources of the corruptions which have polluted you, and of the passions which have led

you astray; and here too may your acts of prayer and adoration be more earnest and more regular than generally they are in this sanctuary. In the Church of God you must guard against ostentation and singularity—you must content yourselves with general expressions of praise and confidence, and with a prescribed form of worship adapted to others as well as to yourselves. But in the hour of retirement you may suffer all the pious fervours of your soul to break forth in rapturous expressions of joy —you may search and drag forth all your hated sin, and cry aloud for mercy—you may remember all the repeated kindnesses you have yourselves experienced—all the seasons of sickness and affliction, under which you have been comforted and relieved—all the worldly schemes, and hopes, in which you have been crowned with success—all the means of grace you have received and improved. You may remember them in the brightest colours, and you may feel them in the deepest recesses of your soul, and while you are far removed from the loud din of the world, and the pryings of men, you may lift up your hands and eyes and your voice to Heaven, in giving thanks to the blessed creator of Heaven and earth. Here too, your sorrows or cares may be laid down before the throne of your God, who can allay their bitterness; and all your wants, and those of your beloved children and friends may be at full enumerated and accompanied by earnest and repeated supplication, so that seeking diligently you cannot fail to find, and knocking importunately you shall at last have the door opened to you.

# SERMON XXXVII.*

THE TWO COMMANDMENTS.

MATTHEW xxii. 40.

*On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*

IN discoursing on the text just now delivered, I shall lay before you a few preliminary observations upon the import of two words, which occur in it, and which you may have been accustomed to understand in a sense too confined. First, I shall point out to you some striking circumstances in the occasion, upon which our Lord pronounced an authoritative sentence on the supreme importance of the two commandments—to love God, and to love our neighbour; and secondly, I shall insist on the sacred obligations, which lie upon us to obey those commandments with the whole force of our minds, and throughout the whole extent of our lives.

When our Lord speaks of the sacred writers themselves, he says, Moses and the Prophets; but if he mentions the sacred writings, he accommodates his language to a technical and arbitrary arrangement, which had been established among his coun-

* 1818.

trymen, which implied sometimes a twofold and sometimes a threefold division of holy writ. Thus, in the last chapter of St. Luke, you read—"that all things might be fulfilled which are spoken of the Son of Man, in the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets;" but in the text and in many other places Christ adheres to another classification—the Law and the Prophets. Now under the word Law was signified, not only the Book of Exodus, where the Law was first given from Mount Sinai, and the Book of Deuteronomy, where it was again communicated and enlarged, but the whole Pentateuch, or five books ascribed to Moses. By the Book of Psalms, or as the original word means, the Book of Praises, you are to understand not merely the hundred and fifty compositions, of which the greater part are supposed to have been written by David, but the Book of Job, the Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. The term Prophets is of yet wider signification, and includes not only the writings of the four greater and the twelve minor prophets, but all the histories admitted into the Jewish Canon, and written some before the captivity, some during it, and some after it. And now you will see the comprehensive sense of the phraseology, which I am explaining to you; for in all the moral parts of the Jewish Scriptures here enumerated, whether poetical or prosaic, whether prophetical or historical, doctrinal or preceptive, the love of God, and the love of our neighbour, form the great corner-stone of our duty; and where you read—"on these two commandments hang all the law and the Prophets," some commentators, perhaps

with more refinement than truth, have suggested that the metaphorical phrase is taken from the customs of the Jews, among whom their sacred books were publicly and reverently suspended in the temple; and therefore the figurative term applied by Christ would have been more intelligible and more forcible to the mind of a Jew, than, upon the first hearing, it usually is to our own.

But farther—you will observe that the love of the Deity is taught in all the Law, all the Psalms, and all the Prophets. You will farther take notice, that the love of God is every where, in the same scriptures, nearly or remotely connected with the love of our neighbour, and that even in speculation they were separated only by the national pride and religious intolerance of the Pharisees, with whom our Lord is represented as conversing, in the chapter of my text.

I shall now point out to you some striking circumstances in the occasion, upon which our blessed Lord pronounced an authoritative sentence on the supreme importance of the two commandments, to love God, and to love our neighbour. We hear that the Pharisees assembled together on finding that Jesus had put to silence the Sadducees. Now the rational and salutary directions which he had laid down for the regulation of our conduct, had many stubborn obstacles to encounter in the prejudices of both these Jewish sects. The Sadducees endeavoured to obscure and narrow the speculative doctrines of the law; and the Pharisees weakened its practical influence by laying an

excessive stress upon ritual observances. The Sadducees affected superior wisdom; and the Pharisees assumed the appearance of superior sanctity. The Sadducees, like their legitimate successors in certain philosophers in later times, seemed to measure the magnitude of their knowledge by the scantiness of their faith. With the wayward and untractable spirit of some modern fanatics, the Pharisees lowered the dignity of true religion by squandering their zeal upon trifles, by pouring forth the bitterest invectives against those who differed from them, and by multiplying, under the supposed authority of Heaven, either tenets to be admitted, or rules to be observed, which really originated in the superstition or the hypocrisy of their advocates. Each aspired to popularity, and professed a sincere and unshaken regard for the writings of Moses. Each with a most criminal and perverse emulation obscured the genuine lustre, and counteracted the right efficacy of those writings. Each imputed to the other the worst motives, and neither were anxious to inquire, whether their own were the best. You are not to suppose that the Pharisees were provoked merely at the confutation of their inveterate and hostile rivals; for, if Jesus had confined his objections to the wrong opinions and the wrong practices of the Sadducees *only*, his answers might have given occasion for triumph rather than alarm to the Pharisees; and he might have found even in their prepossessions a readiness rather to welcome than to reject his own pretensions. But they well knew that the same piercing discernment, the same steady impartiality,

the same unwearied diligence, which had baffled their antagonists, were likely to be employed against themselves. From a sense, therefore, of common danger, they met together for the purpose of entangling Christ by some captious questions. This disposition they manifested upon many other occasions, and in the present it is marked by an aggravation, which is well worthy of our notice, and which should teach us to examine most severely the possible deceitfulness of our own hearts. The Pharisees with folly most contemptible, and presumption most odious, imagined that Jesus, like themselves, was more anxious for the interests of a party, than for the cause of truth. With that blind zeal, which often detects its own craftiness, and exposes its own absurdity, they suspected, that instead of inculcating some solid and comprehensive doctrine, Jesus would endeavour to captivate his hearers by novelty of opinion and singularity of language. They expected, perhaps, that he would have put forward the belief in a Messiah as the first and great commandment. It is indeed the common feeling of weak and wicked men to impute their own weakness and wickedness to competitors; and therefore we may be offended, but cannot be surprised, that the Pharisees anticipated, in the replies of Jesus, the same bigotry and selfishness which belonged to themselves. They conducted, however, their cause with all the skilfulness of which they were capable, and they entrusted the opening of it to a lawyer, or one whose professed especial business it was to study and to expound the Jewish law. With an air

of seeming candour, which after all was intended to veil his latent ill-will, he addressed Jesus in terms of respect, calling him Rabbi or Master; and you will observe that Rab, Rabbi, and Rabboni, were among the Jews three titles of distinction progressive in dignity. The lawyer then asked, "What is the great commandment in the law?" Without hesitation, and without artifice, Jesus answered, not only in the spirit, but according to the letter of the law—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy mind, and all thy soul. This is the first and great commandment." Not waiting for any second question, which inflamed curiosity or disappointed malevolence might suggest, Jesus adds—"and the second is like unto it—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Both commandments are produced—both are approved—both are enjoined.

Thus far then upon the general import of the propositions, Jesus left no room for suspicion to the prejudiced, or cavil to the perverse. He had made no direct or oblique opposition to the authority of Moses. He had employed expressions, for the accuracy of which he could appeal to those writings, the divine origin of which was equally allowed by himself and his opponents. But it often happens, that they who agree on some fundamental principle differ upon the extent to which it is to be applied. The Pharisees themselves hoped that Jesus would proceed to interweave with the words of Moses some opinion of his own, which they might have combated for want of conformity to the law, not merely

as delivered by Moses, but as interpreted by themselves. Even in this hope they were disappointed, for though the answer of Jesus by implication condemned their false glosses and unauthorized additions, yet it is expressed in terms so concise, and yet so energetic, that the most skilful disputant could not evade, nor the fiercest adversary accuse. On these two commandments, says Christ, hang *all* the law and the prophets. By this answer, so concise, and yet perspicuous, so simple and yet irrefragable, the Pharisees were silenced, but not conciliated—they were even convinced, but not reformed.

When our Lord had avoided the snare laid for him upon the two great commandments of the law, he entered into some discussion upon the dignity of the Christ, as compared with that of David, who guided by the spirit had called him Lord; and plain it is, that in this transition he meant to avail himself of the advantage which he had already gained upon one subject, and therefore boldly passed to another point, upon which the Pharisees were secretly more intent, and on which they, from the very first, had been eager to ensnare Jesus, and to defame him. Here too, our Lord was equally successful in eluding cavil and baffling opposition, though by an inverted process, he interrogated and his opponent answered. Probable indeed it is, that from gestures, murmurs, or other signs of deliberate and confederate malice, Christ, from the very beginning of the conversation penetrated the motives of those who surrounded him, a[illegible] intended some kind of rebuke in his fi[illegible] com-

mandments, and directed it against the grovelling prejudices and mischievous comments of the Pharisees.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, said Moses, and it was equally maintained by the Pharisees and by Christ, that he had said it peremptorily and explicitly. Now the love of God, as understood and taught by Christ, is seated in the deepest recesses of the soul. It diffuses its salutary influence over the noblest faculties of the mind. It sanctifies the best affections of the heart. But was this, think you, the just and enlarged view in which it was considered by the Pharisees? Far from it. Their boasted piety was formed of other materials. To pay tithes—to wash the platter—to observe the new moons—to keep fastings frequently, and to be seen of men to fast—to make long prayers, and to be heard of men to pray—to contend for traditions which Moses had not authorized—to enforce observances which Moses had not required, constituted that religion, for which the Pharisees extravagantly applauded themselves, and for which they confidently claimed the tribute of submission and admiration from the credulous whom they had deluded, or the timid whom they had awed.

Thus too, in regard to the second commandment, Moses had said—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and it was allowed equally by Christ and the Pharisees, that such were the words of Moses. But Jesus, on many occasions, corrected the errors, [illegible]counteracted the misrepresentations of the Pha[illegible]port of those words. He made

that essential which they considered as subordinate—he expanded what they united to contract. He declares it necessary to love enemies as well as friends—to love our neighbours, not from the fleeting or feeble impulse of the moment, but from the deep and fixed convictions of our souls; and under the word neighbour, too, he meant to include not only those who lived in the same country, or spoke the same language, or were governed by the same law, or professed the same religion, but all mankind—for all mankind are the creatures of God, and if we love the Maker, we must, in order to be consistent, extend that love to that which he has made—we must love the Jew, indeed, whom the Pharisee viewed as the peculiar, and perhaps sole favourite of Heaven; but we must love also the Sadducee, whom the Pharisee hated—we must love the Samaritan, whom the Pharisee shunned—we must love the Gentile, whom the Pharisee affected to despise.

In truth, my brethren, if you would act up to the spirit of the Gospel, even as it was in some degree cherished, and in the same degree disliked by the Pharisee, you must not suffer the love of your neighbour to be narrowed and enfeebled by any fortuitous circumstance of rank, or locality, or religious persuasion. You must consider acquaintances and strangers—friends and foes—countrymen and foreigners—the members of your own and every other Christian community—the followers of Confucius and Mahomet as well as of Christ—Heretics and Schismatics—Dogmatists and Sceptics—Monotheists and Polytheists—the enlightened and peace-

ful inhabitant of towns in a civilized society and the wild savage roaming for his prey through the trackless forest—the sceptered monarch and the humble cottager—you must consider all of them as forming one great flock, placed here in one spacious fold, under one good shepherd, who in his own good time, and for his own good purposes, will hereafter separate the better from the worse, and consign them to their proper stations, according to the measure which he only can know of their respective merits and demerits.

Subjectively they are neighbours, in the view of the devout philosopher, when he meditates on their common participation of the same nature, their common dependence upon the same providence, and their common responsibility to the same judge. Objectively they become neighbours, whenever it is in your power to bestow upon them good, or to protect them from evil. Such is the capacious and diversified scenery—such is the interesting and holy spectacle—such are the instructive and at the same time ample materials for reflection set before you in the love of our neighbour, as illustrated by the precepts, and consecrated by the example of your blessed Redeemer.

After these explanatory remarks on the circumstances under which the words of the text were spoken by our Lord, I shall in the second place enforce the two great duties imposed upon us by the Law, the Prophets, and the yet higher authority of the Gospel. Doubtless, in this and many other sanctuaries, those duties have been laid before you

frequently and impressed upon you earnestly. But much does it behove this congregation to remember, that, in the excellent catechism prepared for our use by our learned and pious forefathers, the very earliest opportunity is taken for informing the very youngest hearer, that in the decalogue they may chiefly learn what they owe to God and their neighbour. To Christians indeed of all ranks, of all ages, of all churches, do I recommend the frequent and serious perusal of the terms, in which their religious and social duties are explained to you in the catechism of our Common Prayer book; and sure I am that you have there before you a composition simple without languor, and copious without prolixity, equally adapted to the reflecting sage and the humble Christian—equally distinguished by soundness of matter and propriety of arrangement—and equally calculated to make you useful members of society and devout worshippers of God.

Now the solid and large principles laid down in the text re-unite those conceptions upon many interesting and sacred truths, which specious refinement in one quarter, and rash interpretations in another, would tear asunder. They confute the hollow and profane paradoxes of those spurious philosophers who represent the love and even the belief of a Deity, as a superfluous addition to the love of man. They expose the weakness of those ostentatious and clamorous visionaries, who would erect a showy and unsubstantial fabric of faith upon the ruins of good works. Why are you required to love God? Because he is righteous and benevolent. Why are you

called upon to love your neighbour? Because your neighbour has been made by that God capable of some advances in virtue—because he is himself commanded by the same God to exercise his benevolence towards his fellow-creatures—and because his fellow-creatures are placed in a state, where their benevolence towards him must be conducive to his happiness. Man is required to love his neighbour as himself; and did any human being ever love himself reasonably without perceiving that he must incur disgrace and danger and guilt by forfeiting the love of all his neighbours?

You cannot reflect upon the Deity without perceiving that thousands and tens of thousands in various countries, and through many successive generations, have, like yourselves, been created by that Deity, and like yourselves preserved by him. You cannot reflect on the whole race of mankind without feeling that, in loving them, you direct your love towards the very beings by whom yourselves must sometimes wish to be loved; and of whom you know, that through infancy, boyhood, youth, manhood, and age, they are subjects of that love which God exercises towards yourselves, and all his moral and rational creatures. Yes, my brethren, the apparel you wear, the food you eat, your refreshment by sleep in the night, your capacity for labour in the day, your social rights, your domestic comforts, your intellectual and moral improvement, all your innocent enjoyments in this world, and all your consolatory expectations of a world to come are the gracious gifts of your heavenly father. Would you

not love any fellow-creature, who bestowed on you a portion of these blessings? How then can you be justified for not loving unfeignedly and fervently that being to whom you are indebted for all?

And as in viewing his moral dispensations, you find the provision which he has made for your spiritual welfare—easy and obvious is the transition from the love of God to the love of that being, who spake as never man spake—of him, whom a voice from Heaven pronounced to be the well-beloved Son in whom God is well pleased—of him, who is the brightness of his Father's glory—who, having humbled himself by taking not only the likeness of a man, but the condition of a slave, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, for the sake of the whole human race. But if Christ so loved us, ought we not to love our fellow-creatures for whom Christ has lived and died; and calling ourselves Christians can we forget that he has made it not only the bounden duty, but distinguishing test of his disciples, that they love one another?

Much I grant has been said eloquently, and much argumentatively, by some writers of antiquity, upon the power and wisdom of God, as discernible in the natural world—something too has been said, here and there, on the resemblance to God, which may be attained by acts of benevolence; and certain it is, that these excellent men were led on by their researches on physical objects to moral feelings, and were strongly impressed by admiration, and reverence towards the first great cause. But I intreat you to bear in mind one important fact—the love of

God is not the leading doctrine in any system of philosophy, or any code of religious belief, except our own. But the love of God, expressly, repeatedly, eminently, peculiarly, is the language of revealed religion. It is made, avowedly, the fundamental principle both of the Mosaic and the Christian law; and as a complex sentiment it includes veneration, gratitude, an agreeable consciousness of dependence upon the greatest, wisest, and best of beings, mixed with an ardent feeling, which strongly resembles filial affection. Mark then, I beseech you, the spiritual advantage which the Scriptures afford to every man, every woman, and every youth, who now hears me, in the sacred intercourse of their minds, and hearts, and souls with the Almighty. Yes, the study of these Scriptures will enable every man, every woman, and every youth to ascend from the great excellencies attained by heathen sages to the greater and more valuable graces set within the reach of every Christian. It will enable them to ascend from admiration of God to love of him—from contemplation to worship—from calm resignation to strong affiance—from the cheerless submission of dependants to the joyful and willing obedience of sons—and if sons, then heirs—heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ. Such are the peerless and splendid characteristics of your religion.

Granted it must be that, in the text, no mention is made of those external acts, by which we are supposed to perform the will and conciliate the favour of the Deity; but as the love of God is directly enjoined, surely the effects, and the signs of that love,

to which indeed we, independently of any intrinsic command, are impelled by the very constitution of our nature, must be inculcated by implication. The love of God, as I told you, is founded on the relation in which we stand to him as our creator and preserver; and shall we be content with perceiving, as we must do, distinctly, and allowing, as we may do, coldly? Shall we not offer up thanks to him by whom we are created? Shall we not pour forth supplications to him by whom we are preserved? Do we not owe obedience to him as our moral governor? And can we be said to obey, if we neglect those acts of homage, which, under every form of natural religion, have been more or less practised with good intention—those acts, which in his revealed religion are frequently and explicitly enjoined —those acts, which are most congenial to the uncorrupted feelings of the human heart?

Seasons there are, in which it may be peculiarly proper for a religious instructor to insist upon the obligation to love our neighbour, as co-incident, and really co-ordinate with the command, which requires us to love of God, and to show that by co-operation each is advanced to greater excellence, and attains more effectually its own proper end. There are persons too, who, setting up lofty pretensions to piety, represent the teacher of sound morality as an enemy to what they call vital Christianity, and who, though compelled to qualify the charge, rarely abandon it, even if, virtually or professedly, the instructor employs Christian language, and reasons upon Christian principles. Let me then point out a

short and easy process by which you may be enabled, not perhaps to divert the current of their general opinions, but to blunt the edge of their individual reproaches. It is impossible, say they, to love God too much. Granted, but the same may be said with equal truth and equal propriety on the love of our neighbour. We must not eat upon the mountains, nor lift up our eyes unto idols. Granted, but hath not the Lord God told us by his prophets, that he who hath not committed the sin of idolatry, hath also not defiled his neighbour's wife, hath not oppressed any, hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath executed true judgment between man and man, has given his bread to the hungry, and covered the naked with a garment—is just and shall surely live?—Humbly, most humbly, ought we to walk with God. Granted, but in the very same scriptural sentence, are we not instructed to do justice, and not merely to exercise, but love mercy? But never let it be forgotten in a Christian congregation, that by every act of justice, and every act of mercy, we obey God himself, and by such obedience evince the unfeignedness, constancy, and efficacy of the love, which is most unquestionably due to him. Never let it be forgotten, that our Lord himself most humbly not only preached the Gospel, but went about doing good, and that in his miracles the features of power are not brighter than those of benevolence. Never let it be forgotten, that when he pronounced with approbation the first great commandment, he declared the second to be like unto it,

and described both as inculcated by the law and the prophets.

Looking to both as so sanctioned by Christ, and so taught by the Prophets, I admit the unfairness, and even the impiety, of depreciating either; but I do contend, that if, under pretence of zeal for the honour of religion, as contrasted with morality, any indirect attempt be made to loosen what Christ has bound together, such an attempt must be injudicious, and may be erroneous. The subject now assumes a form which makes it of the highest importance not to misunderstand it; and therefore in examining it, I must entreat you to indulge me with a little more of your time than is commonly allowed to sermons from the pulpit.

Socrates, as we learn from a great Roman moralist, lamented that perverse spirit of disputation which, in his time, severed the useful from the right, and he justly contended, that in the constitution of our nature the attainment of both is compatible—that on principles of duty the pursuit of both, rightly understood, was laudable—that, in point of fact, nothing can be ultimately useful which is not honourable, and that every thing honourable *is* ultimately useful. In the same manner will a considerate religionist deplore every doctrine which tends to sever the love of God from the love of our neighbour, and leads us into a secret persuasion, that abundant piety will expiate defective philanthropy. The deceitful heart of man is, I fear, too prone to beguile him into such persuasion, and upon that persuasion he may secretly act, and secretly rely;

though he does not, like the heathen polemic, uniformly and openly proclaim it. And as self-conceit is nearly allied to self-delusion, occasions may arise when, obliquely comparing his own tenets and his own condition with those of other men, he may explicitly maintain, that they who love God are far more pleasing in his sight than they who love their neighbour. Now every accurate judge of human nature must be aware, that on such subjects greater dependence is to be placed upon that which is preservative, than upon that which is remedial; and, therefore, supposing that they who now hear me have, in substance, not in express words, sometimes been ear-witnesses of the doctrines to which I just now adverted, and trusting that they have not yet been decoyed into assent, I shall lay before you the following series of observations.

Such is the occasional and inevitable sensibility of the human mind to impressions from omnipotence and omniscience, that even they whose sympathy with their fellow-creatures is rare, or transient, or torpid, may without hypocrisy and without fanaticism, give themselves credit for piety, as showing itself in reverence, in submission, and in some expressions, let me add, of thankfulness. My wish, therefore, is to impress upon your minds the necessity of keeping *both* the great commandments; and therefore I shall here endeavour to expose the fallacy of that reasoning, by which we enter into a kind of compromise with our consciences, and rest our claims to acquittal for the habitual neglect of one virtue upon the voluntary cultivation of ano-

ther. The being whom you profess to love, so far as wonder, or veneration, or even gratitude is implied in the term, has endowed you with the faculty of discerning beauty and order both in the physical and the moral constitution of things; and in the exercise of that faculty, you experience a complex and vivid sentiment, which, in the language both of religionists and moralists, may be called love, and which is accompanied, you will observe, by a consciousness of duty. But if your fellow-creatures were destitute of that benevolence which you undervalue, and were exposed to the numberless evils which must flow from the want of it, would the character of the Deity be quite amiable even in your sight? If you admit and adore the boundless perfections of God, are you altogether consistent in an utter disregard to men, in whom there is the same approbation of those perfections, and some imperfect resemblance to them in their honest though limited endeavours to imitate them? The same Being has furnished you with placability and compassion, with the love of your country, or your kindred, or your neighbourhood, and other social affections; and can you seriously believe that those affections were given in vain, or that the objects of them are placed before them for no end that is worthy of that very wisdom, and that very righteousness, which you ascribe unto God? The diffusion of our good will among related objects, as many sagacious moralists have remarked, is a matter of direct experience; and, on the same ground, should not the love of God be carried on to those

who are placed in the same relation to him with ourselves—those who adore as we ought to adore him—those who trust as we ought to trust in him —and those who, in the progress of piety, aspire to that perfect love of him which casteth out fear? Would you consult facts? Is it not then necessary, let me ask you, for the happiness, and even preservation of the human race, that the love of our neighbour should operate before the love or even the knowledge of God can be introduced into the mind? In the liveliness and the frequency, as well as the earliness of the feeling, do we recognize the properties almost of instinct. Do not the rudest forms of it tend to mitigate the miseries, and to check the outrages incident to a state of barbarism? Does not the spirit of it pervade the artificial and ornamental, but surely agreeable and useful courtesies of civilized life? And in those acts of clemency, mercy, and loving-kindness, which belong to the higher classes of virtue, is not the exercise of it marked by the appropriate and charming name of humanity?

After such ample and diversified preparation in the structure of our mind for the love of our neighbour, must we not discern that a second commandment is eminently worthy of the honourable station assigned to it by that heavenly teacher who pronounced the first great commandment to be the love of God?

On the other hand, in respect to the selfish and unsocial affections, are you not aware, that in restraining their excess, you give a decisive proof of

sincerity in your love towards God, that you perform a task, meritorious in proportion as it is difficult—that you excite in others the same sentiment of veneration and love for their own participation in his kindness—that you increase the general sum of human happiness—that you are by these means the instrument of his gracious designs, and upon the surest grounds of reason and religion make yourselves the objects of his approbation? If then, by the internal frame of your minds, and the properties of your external condition, you, as moral agents, have opportunities and incentives to love God and your neighbour also, is it altogether proper or safe for you to perform the one and omit the other?—But further—unprofitable, though acceptable to God, must be every act of homage—but acts of benevolence to your neighbour are profitable to them; and can you doubt, but that, if performed at once from a sense of duty to God, and a sense of goodwill to your neighbours, they will be acceptable to him? Or will you deny that, if you be capable, as doubtless you are, of performing them, they are indispensible parts of the obedience due to God?—Consider that to the love of man there are impediments, which do not operate against the love of God. No man, whose understanding was not disordered, ever *hated* God, not even in those moments when the modes of his agency, or the nature of his attributes, or the reality of their existence, were controverted—and though the gloomy views taken of his dispensations may sometimes be such as, upon the supposition of their justness, produce dissatis-

faction or dismay, yet they who, from the prejudices of their education, or the scantiness of their knowledge, are guided by such views, may with truth affirm, that in their reverence to God, and their thankfulness to him, there is no alloy of hatred. They may so affirm for this plain reason, because such persons too generally claim to themselves a place not among the reprobate, but the elect, and election, as an act of favour, must to some extent produce love. If, indeed, those persons supposed themselves to be placed in the situation to which they consign many of their fellow-creatures—if they imagined that by an irreversible and irresistible decree they were disabled from obeying the will of God—that they were compelled to disobey it, and that for such disobedience they were to be punished for ever—in such a case, whatever language the desire of preserving a character for sanctity before men, or their awe struggling with despondency, or the habit of speaking in the terms of a favourite sect, might induce them to hold on the glory of God, yet there could be no acknowledgement of God's mercy, for none is shown to them; there could be no gratitude to the benevolence of God, for they are not the objects of it—when misery not to be averted or abated impends over their souls, there can be no room for indifference—there would be a necessity for hatred irrevocable and invincible. Yes, my brethren, hatred mingled with fear—suspending hatred but not mitigating it—is all which unhappy and misguided men would feel, and it is that which they *must* feel, though fear might now and then

restrain them from looking stedfastly at what is passing within their own bosoms, and from trusting their own ears with direct curses of their Maker.

But the love of God is in little danger of being converted into hatred by the confirmed Calvinist, because, as I told you, he believes that his own name is sealed among the saints in the book of Heaven. It is in no such danger with the sober-minded believer, because he holds it impossible for an infinitely perfect being to hate any thing that he hath made, or to have any pleasure in the death of a sinner—because, not thinking of himself more highly than he ought to think, he is thankful for the ordinary but sufficient aids proffered to him in working out his own salvation with fear and trembling—because, in the punishment of the wicked who have abused their freedom of choice, he sees justice, and in the reward of the righteous, who have chosen well, he sees justice blended with benevolence—because, in a judgment to come, as represented in the great scheme of redemption, he meets with many occasions to contemplate the mercies as well as the terrors of the Lord—and because, leaving untouched those secret things which belong to omniscience alone, he, in the visible works of God, finds abundant reason to pronounce them very good, and on this solid foundation would rest the glory of God. Thus with the advocate for reprobation and election, asserting to himself the favourite parts of his system upon the one hand, and with the more enlightened and discreet believer on the other, the love of God is not endangered by their respective tenets.

But for the hatred of our neighbour new occasions will continually arise in the bustle of life, and therefore, for the purpose of precaution, the love of our neighbour should be cherished diligently. Even your virtues, such as attachment to your kindred, your country, your religion, may be carried to excess, and under false notions of merit betray you into violations of the second great commandment; and if this be the case, how numerous and how aggravated must be the transgressions of it from the direct operation of our selfish and unsocial affections? But farther—the love of our neighbour is I fear peculiarly endangered by the Calvinistic system from motives by which our hearts are too apt to be led astray. The wickedness of the reprobate is itself a proper object of hatred; and that the Almighty, for his own glory, did of his own will, ordain the offence and reject the offender is a consideration, which in the mind of a Calvinist must inflame hatred by an additional sentiment of horror, though a rational Christian will always mingle pity with disapprobation towards the agent. But in the Calvinist, pride too often predominates over pity, in his reflections upon beings whom he considers as graceless, helpless, hopeless, outcasts from Heaven, and rebels against God. For why should he love the man whom God hates? Why should he assist the man whom God hath abandoned to a reprobate mind? Why should he offer consolation or instruction to those whose minds God hath so constructed, that seeing they cannot see, and hearing they cannot understand? Why should he not select for approbation

those who, like himself, by the appointment of the Deity, are the chosen objects of God's favour—to those who, after a call, cannot err—who, after a decree, cannot perish—who, after assurance of such decree, cannot be deceived or disappointed? And if in the course of his agency, he should despise, should hate, should oppress the reprobate—if he should deride their faint and feeble attempts to do right—if he should exaggerate their guilt, when they do amiss, how can his own salvation be affected, for the call is indisputable, the decree is irreversible, the assurance is infallible.

Do I then suspect that every Calvinist will persecute the defenceless? Or that no Calvinist will relieve the poor? Far be such blindness from my head, and such uncharitableness from my heart. Narrow and crooked, indeed, must have been the path of my researches into the rise, the progress, and the direction of human motives, if I had not preserved the wise provision of nature in those impelling and repelling causes, by which men, with the loss indeed of consistency, but without any immediate consciousness of inconsistency, are sometimes preserved from the legitimate consequences of their own favourite error. Is it not recorded, that the disciples of Epicurus acted better than they reasoned? And do we not know, that when the tenets of their sterner rivals, the Stoics, upon the equality of crimes, was brought to the test of experience, the moral sense implanted in the heart of man revolted—the practice became right though opinion was wrong—and yet that in the very front of practice, opinion continued to be

stiffly maintained? Such is frequently the difference between profession and action in the Calvinist or the reprobate, and in Christians of other classes towards the heretic. Eager in defending their peculiar creed, they without hesitation and without compunction will consign him to Hell, and yet were they to see him grievously tormented, the kinder feelings of the soul would instantaneously be awakened, and urge them to dip their finger in water and cool his tongue. The tendency of Calvinism to cramp and enfeeble the love of our Maker is obvious to every reflecting mind, and in the diversified concerns of life, it will in some degree produce the most baleful effects. That tendency, however, as I am well aware, may to some extent be counteracted by the restraints of human laws—by the established decorums of civilized life—by near relation—by early friendship—by a common interest in secular concerns—by the soothing expectation of personal advantage, and by that constitutional tenderness which now and then triumphs over the blind tyranny of religious zeal. But the tendency, which I am now ascribing to Calvinism, is certainly to obstruct the love of our neighbour, as a being unworthy of that love, and to increase also the force of other motives, which generally and visibly generate hatred. Happy it is, however, for the Calvinist and for his fellow-creatures, that he is more disposed to assert his own right to be numbered among the elect, than to fix upon individuals, whom he believes to be reprobate, and from whom, in consequence of that belief, his good-will is likely to be withdrawn.

But while we lament the prepossessions and infirmities of the Calvinists, let us take heed unto ourselves. Little must he be accustomed to analyse causes and effects, and to discriminate the ostensible from the real motives of action, who does not perceive, that to the love of our neighbour, a misguided sense of religion has produced many other hindrances than those which I have ascribed to the general tendency of Calvinism. Yes, my brethren, intolerance, under all its various modifications from insult to persecution, from the clamours of bigots and the anathemas of councils to the dungeons, and the chains, and the racks, and the flames employed by the inquisitors for the glory of God, are the produce of spiritual pride. That pride lurked in the bosoms of the Pharisees when they maliciously opposed the pretensions of Christ to be received as the promised Messiah, and insidiously explored his opinions on the two great commandments of the law. That pride steals upon the soul under numberless disguises, and diffuses itself through the whole intellectual and moral constitution of our mind. Formidable it is alike from its subtilty and its violence. With equal facility it associates itself with hypocrisy and sincerity. It spreads with the force of contagion through multitudes and individuals. It warps the judgment of the wise, and cramps the energies of the virtuous. It records ignorances and errors in the blackest catalogue of sins; and when the supposed sinner is thrust out of the synagogue, or when he is deprived of liberty, character, or even life, it cheers us with the belief that we are promot-

ing the glory of God. The greater part of our selfish and unsocial affections, by whatever colouring they may soften the deformity of means and ends, rarely seek, and more rarely obtain, justification from our moral sense. But spiritual pride, amidst all its encroachments on the comforts of life, and all its wildest excesses, is invigorated by a consciousness of merit, in every triumph over the salutary rules of civilized life, and every tender and delicate sensibility of the human soul. Zeal, indeed, in the pursuit of its object, casts away every other consideration of real or supposed duty, and inspires its votaries with affiance in their own righteousness—when the holy son abandons to perdition his graceless father, and thus affords a proof to his own heart, that he seeks the approbation of God rather than the praise of man. Such are always the tendencies of spiritual pride. But against an enemy so dangerous to our innocence and our usefulness, no vigilance can be too keen, no resistance too firm, no desire to possess the opposite qualities of candour and moderation too ardent, no efforts to acquire them too frequent or too strenuous.

It is my duty, as a lover of justice, to admit that the Calvinist is often entitled to the praise of piety, and that in applying his tenets and practice he is influenced by, what appears to him at the moment, good intention. But as a serious and diligent searcher into the movements of the human heart, and as a teacher of that pure and benevolent religion which came down from above, I think it no less my duty to state that, under various circumstances, an ha-

bitually misguided conscience may be scarcely less fatal to the real interests of virtue than a hardened one. That a kind of obduracy is gradually formed in the deepest recesses of the soul, which makes it inaccessible to all those kinder feelings of pity, and of candour, which the Calvinist indeed may continue to exercise towards the members of his own sect, but which he would consider as unnecessary and perhaps criminal, if extended to his reprobate fellow-creatures, constituting, as he imagines, the great majority of mankind. Well, therefore, does it become me to warn you against the first step towards opinions, which, strengthened by sympathy with other men, and enlivened by a feeling of meritorious dissent from the common opinions of a degenerate world, may ultimately lead us to misunderstand, and to misrepresent, the real properties of things, and to call evil good, and good evil.

Reflect then, I beseech you, on the numerous and powerful causes which may obstruct you in the discharge of the duty which you owe to your neighbour, even while you suppose yourselves to perform really the duty which you more immediately owe unto God. Let me point out some of them. In the love of God, as such, you are not directly called upon to make any sacrifice of those gratifications which are pleasing to your selfish or unsocial affections in the mistaken pursuit of happiness. You are not engaged in any sensible struggle with some of the most delusive and most vehement emotions of the heart. You are not employed in any direct resistance to restless jealousy—none to towering

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for in the lowest may the widow give her mite—and in every condition, whether prosperous or adverse; for the most adverse may afford a cup of cold water. But, if such opportunities be disregarded, will it be supposed that the love of God, separate from the love of your neighbour, will call forth all the powers with which you are furnished, and even trusted as moral agents; and if it does not, as most assuredly it cannot, will the excuses, which you easily frame to justify yourselves be so easily allowed before your Maker? Whatever brightness the notion of a Deity may diffuse over the universe, yet he must ever himself be a distant object, viewed through the medium of faith, and therefore the want of love towards him might leave in the mind only a dreary void. But from the entire absence of love towards our neighbour, the world, and all its concerns, would be darkness visible, serving only to discover scenes of confusion and woe. To justify yourselves by loving your Maker, while you do not love your neighbour, do not imagine that man, arrayed as he is with a crowded, varied, and splendid assemblage of social qualities, would reach the high excellence for which he is designed, if all his talents, and all his hours were dedicated to the meditations of the recluse, or the orisons of the devotee; do not imagine that by bowing the knee in the hallowed name of Jesus, you have acted up to the example which Jesus set before you, of good-will to men; do not imagine that by researches on the attributes and works of the Deity, by hymns in his praise, by sacrifice on his altar, by thanks for past blessings, or

supplications for future protection, you have discharged the whole of your Christian duty. For this were error and inconsistency scarcely less fatal than that which I imputed to those presumptuous dogmatists who contend for the love of man to the exclusion of the love of God. Do you then appeal to the text? There, surely, the love of both is recommended on the same occasion, and placed on the same high footing of authority in the religion of Moses, and the religion of Christ. Will you consult other passages in Scripture? Listen then to the simple and pathetic language of that teacher, who is described to you as pre-eminently the follower whom Jesus loved. In the Epistle of St. John we have this truly wise and pious declaration, "God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Thus far he inculcates the first commandment. What value does he assign to the second? "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and he that loveth not knoweth not God—for God is love."

Thus in the writings of this Apostle, the same foundation is laid both for the love of God, and the love of our neighbour. It is placed in the perfections of the Deity himself—God is love. The same high distinction is assigned to both; we are to love one another, because love is of God—because every one that loveth is born of God—and because if God so loved us as to send his Son to announce, as from the mercy-seat, the forgiveness of our sins, we therefore ought to love one another. From the fertility

of the mind in suggesting specious reasons for doubtful actions, the objector may here say, I love God, because he is perfect; but how does it thence follow that I ought to love man, surrounded as he is by such numberless and glaring imperfections? Be it so; but who art thou, man, who thus darest to sit in judgment on the faults of thy fellow-creatures, to overlook thy own, and to point thy scorn, or vindicate thy apathy towards a race of beings upon whom, whether they be just or unjust, the Maker of heaven and earth hath caused the glorious sun to shine, the refreshing dews to descend, and the clouds, which obey his voice, to drop fatness in the former and the latter rain?

To conclude. Some Christian duties there are, which, though important, are yet represented by Christianity itself as less pleasing in the sight of God than the love of our neighbour, producing its fairest fruits in acts of kindness. The word which is, in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, translated charity, would more properly, and even more emphatically have been rendered *love;* and it is the very word, you will observe, which St. John again and again uses in this very signification. Now from the properties which, with the most glowing eloquence, are ascribed to it by St. Paul himself, you will perceive that he distinctly and exclusively means by it the love of our neighbour. "Though I speak," says he, "with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not charity—to avoid singularity I will retain the word charity—I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. Charity," he adds, "never faileth; but whether there be prophecies

they shall fail," by which he may mean interpretations of Scripture; "whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge," by which is often signified exclusively the knowledge of sacred writ, it "shall vanish away." Nor is the Apostle content with preferring charity to prophecy, and tongues to knowledge. No, no, my brethren, after a copious and luminous description of the excellencies inherent in charity, and of the salutary effects proceeding from it, he thus concisely and emphatically concludes, "And now abide faith, hope, charity; but the greatest of these is charity." If the man doth not cherish that spirit of candour and moderation which endears in every possessor the love of our neighbour to every observer; if he is puffed up by airy vanity, or swelling haughtiness; if he vaunteth himself from imaginary superiority in spiritual endowments, or in temporal distinctions of rank, or wealth, or fame; if he behaveth himself unseemly, in coarse ribaldry to shock the modest, contemptuous taunts to wound the unoffending, or brutal harshness to weigh down the unfortunate; if with unceasing and unrelenting rigour he seeketh his own; such a man must be warned that his faith however firm, and his hope however ardent, will profit him nothing at the tribunal of his Maker. Even his boasted love of God, when traced through all its intricate windings, and up to all its remote sources, will be found insincere, as well as unavailing, unless he presume to controvert the decision of St. John, that inspired teacher, who, concerning a man professing to love God, and really hating his neighbour, hath pronounced that he is a liar.

Whether then we reflect on the external condition, or the internal faculties of men; whether we consult our judgment, or our feelings; whether we look to the principles of natural religion, or the principles of revealed, we are led to one and the same result on the duties prescribed in my text. That result has been clearly and forcibly started by St. John, who to a series of directions, in which the most enlarged virtue is combined with the most exalted piety, has subjoined this most instructive and most impressive close—"This commandment have we from the Father, that he who loveth God love his brother also."

# SERMON XXXVIII.

MY MEAT IS TO DO THE WILL OF GOD.

JOHN iv. 34.

*Jesus saith unto them, my meat, or (as a very sensible translator has lately rendered the words) my* FOOD, *is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*

VIRTUE, whether we consider it as a habit in practice, or in disposition—whether we analyze its principles or its obligations—whether we examine its properties by the abstractions of philosophy, or the dictates of common sense, must ultimately be resolved into the will of the Deity, and of course is, in its most perfect state, inseparable from religion. Doubtless, by various writers, intent, as it should seem, upon the establishment of favourite theorems, or heated by their imaginations into undue and undistinguishing fondness for particular terms, it has been described under various denominations. Some expatiate upon its beauty, and others upon its usefulness. It has been said to consist in the conformity of our actions to the fitness of things, to rectitude, to truth, to general good. But when the ideas contained under these words are unravelled,

and the propositions into which they have been introduced are traced to their legitimate consequences, we shall find that they presuppose an established system of causes and effects, from which beauty, or usefulness, or fitness, derive their origin; that they imply an adaptation of the human mind to love that beauty, to discern that usefulness, to approve of that fitness, to assent to that truth, to promote that general good; or, in other words, such a correspondence between the physical and the moral world—between the agency of man, the subjects upon which he acts, and the final causes of his action, as must evidently be ascribed to the ordinary or extraordinary dispensations of the Deity. By the will of that Deity happiness is connected with virtue. By the same will the desire of happiness is interwoven in our very nature; by the same will then we are commanded to be virtuous, in order to be happy; and thus a perfect harmony subsists between the works and the words of God—between the attribute of holiness, and that of benevolence—between the powers and the duty of his moral creatures—between their duty and his will. By whatsoever process too the knowledge of our duty be obtained, whether it proceed from natural or revealed religion—whether we be instructed by enlightened sages, or inspired apostles, still the rules on which that duty is contained must be adapted to such visible works of God, as we experimentally find to affect the exercise of our moral faculties, and lead us into the belief of a moral government. The sanc-

tions, which having the force of obligation, communicate to those rules the property of laws exist by the appointment of God, and the ends to which those sanctions are subservient must be the purposes of God. With consummate propriety, therefore, our blessed Lord describes the work which he was sent to do as the will of his Father, and in performing that will, the supernatural powers which he employed were instruments for giving fuller efficacy to the authority of his injunctions, and the influence of his example, and for furnishing him with additional opportunities of showing his perfect obedience to God, and his tender love towards mankind.

In farther discoursing upon the words of my text, I shall first explain some occurrences that are recorded, and some expressions that are employed in the course of the interesting history of which that text makes a part; secondly, keeping in view the metaphorical language of our blessed Lord, I shall unfold the import of it, as it may be generally applied to men, who practising and loving virtue would perform the will of God; and thirdly, I shall consider it as peculiarly illustrated by that purity of conduct, and that sanctity of heart, which are ascribed to the Author and Finisher of our Faith in completing the work assigned to him by his Father. And looking upon this part of the subject as more important than the preceding, I shall make some prefatory observations upon sacred biography, as contrasted with profane, more especially as exemplified in the Gospel of St. John.

Jesus, it seems, had come to a town, that in Hebrew is called Sichem, which means a portion, or as by the Jews it was contemptuously named *Sychar*, a falsehood, in allusion to what they held to be the false religion of the Samaritans. The Old Testament furnishes us with many similar instances of a play upon words, and for the disposition of the Jews to employ this property of their language to the prejudice of the Samaritans, it were easy enough to account from the activity and malignity of religious intolerance. The disciples had left their Master weary with his journey, and sitting, not as our translation obscurely and improperly says *thus*, but according to the purport of the original word used by St. John, οὕτως,* *negligently*, and as with little

* I am aware that another interpretation is given to the word by respectable scholars, who consider οὕτως as a consecutive particle, as we say in English narrative "and so" for "and then." This doubtless is the sense of the word in three passages quoted by Krelsius from Josephus. V. Ant. i. 16. οὐ πρὸς τὸ μέγεθος τῆς παρανομίας παριδόντας—πρὸς δὲ τὸ συγγενὲς καὶ το τάχα καὶ λόγοις ἂν σωφρονῆσαι, σκοπήσαντας, οὕτω ποιήσασθαι τὴν πρεσβείαν; ib. viii. 11. 1. ἐπεὶ σὲ μέγαν ἐκ μικροῦ καὶ μηδὲν ὄντος ἐποίησα—οὕτως σε πάλιν καθαιρήσω: B. J. ii. 8, 5. Ζωσάμενοι σκεπάσμασι λινοῖς, οὕτως ἀπολούονται τὸ σῶμα ψυχροῖς ὕδασι. I admit that the sacred writers have in one instance so used the word, Acts xx. 11. ἀναβὰς δὲ, καὶ κλάσας ἄρτον, καὶ γευσάμενος —οὕτως ἐξῆλθε, "so," or "then he went out." But I do not agree with him in applying the same sense of the word either to this verse in St. John's Gospel, or to Acts xxvii. v. 17. and I have the satisfaction to observe, that Abresch and Schlewsner hold "forte" as I do, to be the better explanation. Both the Scholiasts on οὕτως, in the 1198th line of the Ajax of Sophocles give ὡς ἔτυχεν as one meaning of the word οὕτως. Such

or no effort of choice, but rather by mere accident, he had found a place. And in this difference of opinion from our learned translators, I am supported by the concurrence of such distinguished scholars as Wetstein, Abresch, and Schleusner; and, as you may read in Whitby's commentary, of Chrysostom, and Theophylact, who explained οὕτως by ἁπλῶς, ὡς ἔτυχε.

Having then sitten down by Jacob's well, which is situated to the south of the city, our Lord sent his disciples to buy meat, and while they were gone a Samaritan woman came to draw water. In eastern countries, you will observe, this office was gene-

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also is its meaning in the first Philippic of Demosthenes, ὅταν γὰρ ὑμεῖς, ἐξ ὧν ἂν ἀκούητε, ὅ,τι ἂν τύχῃ ῥαδιώς ψηφίζεσθε, τί καὶ χρὴ προσδοκᾷν; i. e. "cum vos ex iis modo, quæ audieritis, quicquid in mentem venerit temere statuatis, quid tandem expectandum vobis est." Thus also St. Luke, in the xviith of Acts, v. 27. φοβούμενοί τε μὴ εἰς τὴν σύρτιν ἐκπέσωσι, χαλάσαντες τὸ σκεῦος, οὕτως ἐφέροντο. Here again the English Version is obscure and faulty; "And fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strike sail, and so were driven." I know not whether our translators by the word "so," meant "then," or "after striking sail;" but I conceive the real meaning to be "they were driven on as chance would have it at the mercy of the waves and winds." Among the different significations of the Latin word *sic*, we have "temere," or "negligenter."

> Cur non sub alta vel platano, vel hac
> Pinu jacentes *sic* temere.
>
> HORACE, Carm. l. II. Od. xi. v. 13.

> Leporem venator ut alta
> In nive sectetur, positum *sic* tangere nolit.
>
> HORACE, Serm. l. I. 2. v. 105.

rally performed by unmarried females, or when it fell to the lot of those who were married, as was evidently the case with the Samaritan woman, we may conclude that she was too indigent to employ servants. The inhabitants of the east were very curious as to the quality of the water they drank, and from the intense heat of the climate they usually sent for it in the morning or the evening. But as St. John follows the Roman calculation of time, which divided the day into twelve equal parts from sun-rise to sun-set, and as he speaks in the chapter of the sixth hour, it is possible that the Samaritan woman met Jesus about noon, when, upon seeing her draw water, he said, "Give me to drink."

From the disputes which subsisted between the Jews and the Samaritans upon the number of the sacred books, whether it should include the Pentateuch only, or that larger collection called by the Jews the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, and about the proper place of worship, whether it should be Jerusalem exclusively, or Mount Gerizim as well as Jerusalem, they viewed each other with the most fierce and unrelenting abhorrence. This spirit began early; for we read in the 30th of Ecclesiasticus, v. 26, "there be two manner of nations which my soul abhorreth—they that sit upon the mountain of Samaria, and they that dwell among the Philistines." The same spirit continued for many ages; and hence we find in the Gemara, "him that has learnt the first written law, and the Mishna, or secondary law, and not the doctrine imparted to the disci-

ples of the wise, Rabbi Eleasar holdeth for a plebeian, Rabbi Samuel for a blockhead, Rabbi Janai for a Samaritan, Rabbi Achi for a sorcerer."* As to the situation of the parties, while our Lord was upon earth, it may be seen in many passages of the New Testament. What was the language of the reviling Jews? Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a *demon;* for so the Greek word ought to be rendered here and elsewhere. Again, the Jews, you are told in the chapter of the text, *have no dealings with the Samaritans;* and here you will permit me to remark, that the original words, if correctly translated, which in our common version they are not, carry with them a sense extremely applicable to my subject. Commercial dealings between the Jews and Samaritans were not indiscriminately prohibited by national usage, or religious traditions. But as the Egyptians are said, in the history of Joseph, to have thought it an abomination to eat with the Hebrews; so the inhabitants of Judæa and Samaria shunned all convivial intercourse with each other. "It is an abomination," says Raschi in his gloss upon the Gemara, to eat the bread, or drink the wine of a Samaritan."† The words used by St. John perfectly agree with this practice: οὐ γὰρ συγχρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρείταις; they did not eat nor drink together — they lived not in the same house—they employed not the same domestic utensils. But among these religious zealots, as

* See cap. 3, page 512, of the Excerpta in Wagenseilii Sota.

† See p. 515 of the Sota.

among their over-righteous and contentious sucessors in later times, hatred would occasionally make a temporary truce with avarice; and bigotry itself, with all its characteristic loftiness, scrupulosity, and stubbornness, would now and then be dazzled with the prospect of an advantageous bargain, and truckle to the rival pretensions of worldly prudence.* Let it not be supposed that this mutual avoidance of society between the Jews and the Samaritans was unaccompanied by baneful and even criminal consequences. For the frequent occurrence of it must have awakened the remembrance and sharpened the asperity of all the religious prepossessions by which it had been originally produced, and with which it was habitually associated. When the weeping mother, in a well-known tragedy of antiquity, had with difficulty prevailed upon her two sons contending for a throne to meet together in her presence; and when they fiercely disdained to address, and even behold each other, she said to one of them,

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* Though not necessary, it may not be improper to mention another privilege retained by the Jews. They might return the blessing of a Samaritan; and as the exercise of this right was not very extensive, nor very difficult, if the man who fell among thieves had been a Samaritan, possible it is, that the priest and Levite, instead of binding up his wounds, would have recommended him to heaven when they passed by on the other side. Well it were, if similar instances of shadowy piety and barren humanity were never to be found among those who live in better times, and under a better law.

" Turn thy face,
Look on thy brother; better wilt thou speak,
Eye fixed on eye, and better he receive
Thy words."

POTTER'S Translation of the Phœnissæ, 489.

Surely Jocasta here reasoned upon a principle which is deeply seated in the recesses of the human heart, and most extensively affects the duties and the interests of human life. Who among ourselves that dispassionately looks back upon his own experience will deny, that after cheerful and innocent intercourse with those whom he was accustomed to dislike, many a latent feeling of anger has subsided; many a fault, which during the absence of the objects had been seen in the darkest colours, has disappeared, and many an amiable quality has been unexpectedly brought into view? Who that carries about him the penetration of a philosopher, or the candour of a Christian, must not have formed many an anxious, and many a serious wish, that they who widely, but conscientiously differ from each other upon disputed points of faith, might have the chance at least of exchanging contempt for esteem, hatred for love, suspicion for confidence, when occasional participation in the pleasures of courteous and guileless converse had unfolded to both parties their real character and inward worth? From untoward combination of circumstances, a solitary experiment, I may grant, may sometimes fail; but in minds not entirely destitute of virtuous sensibility, repeated experiments, assisted by calm reflection, will generally terminate in the happiest results

Yes, my brethren, good sense and good feeling would gradually obtain an honourable triumph over the sullenness of the bigot, the irascibility of the polemic, the haughtiness of the hierarch, the acrimony of the sectarian, the scruples of the meek and lowly religionist, and perhaps even the stern and studied reserve of the wary but ambitious and obsequious worldling.

You will observe, my hearers, the interpretation which I have adopted of the Greek word *συγχρνῶται*, was proposed by the learned Bosius, to whose remarks I have in my own papers*

* Bosius, c. 5, in his interpretation of *νεωτερικαὶ ἐπιθυμίαι*, v. 22, c. 2, Epist. to Timothy, gives what I think the right interpretation of *συγχρῶνται*: "non una utuntur cibo et potu." The word *συγχρῶνται* occurs only this once in the New Testament; but the corresponding terms, *συγχρησάμενος* and *συγχρῆσις* are used, the first by Basil in the Catena of Fathers upon John, and by Clemens, in the 6th book of the *Στρωμάτεις*, and *συγχρῆσις* by the same Clemens, in the 1st book of the *Στρωμάτεις*; though this word, as he observes, was unknown to lexicographers. *Συγχρησάμενος* is also used by Polybius, l. 1, c. 20. of the Romans passing over into Sicily: *παρά Ταραντίνων καὶ Λοκρῶν, ἔτι δὲ καὶ Ἐλεατῶν καὶ Νεαπολιτῶν, συγχρησάμενοι πεντηκοντόρους καὶ τριήρεις.* He either borrows and uses what belongs to another, or uses it together with the owner. As applied to things then, it may signify to have dealings. But in the passage before us it is applied to persons. Bosius observes, that in words belonging to food there is often an ellipsis: thus Luke ix. v. 52. "they went into a village of the Samaritans," *ὥστε ἑτοιμάσαι αὐτοῦ*. So again, Acts c. x. v. 10. "he was hungry," *καὶ ἤθελε γευσάσθαι*. This is very true, but does not assist in the solution of the phrase we are now considering. The compound word, as applied to persons, is, I grant, not to be found in profane writers; and in St. John there

subjoined corrections and additional illustrations; which, as they are supported by passages in the Greek and Latin languages, and depend upon principles of verbal criticism, it were unnecessary for me to produce at this time in this sanctuary. But the good sense of my hearers will readily suggest to them, that the explanation I have given is more clearly and more closely connected with the occasion upon which St. John employs the term, than is the phrase "to have no dealings with the Samaritans." Our Lord, you see, was thirsty; he wished

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is no reason to admit an ellipsis of the food, or thing used, in addition to the case expressing the persons with whom it is to be used. But the profane writers employed the simple verb to express what St. John expresses by the compound verb, the act of living familiarly, and therefore occasionally in convivial intercourse with other men. Χρῆσθαι τινι, says Budæus Comm. Ling. Gr. p. 263 est *aliquo uti*, h. e. συνημερεύειν, συζῆν, ut Cicero Pro Cluent. *Uti tali matre noluit;* Isæus, "νυνὶ δὲ χρώμενος ἡμῖν καὶ περὶ πλείστου ποιούμενος ἁπάντων." Horace and other writers employ the word *uti* with this import:

Me capitolinus convictore usus amicoque
A puero est.

Again, Utere Pompeio Grospho, "take Grosphus for your familiar companion." Again, Si sciret regibus uti, "if he knew how to live on terms of familiarity with great men." So Lucilius, l. 14.

Quem metuas sæpe, interdum quem utare libenter; et Turpilius in *Pædio,*

Nuptias objeci, amicos utor primores viros.

N. B. Bosius' interpretation is in the 2d volume of the Thesaurus Theologico-Philosoph. by German Protestant Divines, published at Amsterdam 1702. This work was followed in 1751 by two large folio volumes, called Novus Theologico-Philosoph. Thesaurus, collected by Theodore Hasæus and Conrad Ikenius.

to drink from a Samaritan well water drawn for him in a Samaritan vessel by a Samaritan woman. She, therefore, knowing that Jesus was a Jew, and supposing that his mind was imbued with Jewish prejudices against her countrymen, naturally enough wondered at the request of Jesus, because he was a Jew. But our Lord gently reproved her misconception of his real mission, and added, that if she had known who it was that spoke to her, she would first have asked of him, and that he would have given to her the living water. When by her answer she appeared to understand his words literally, and of course erroneously—when she had expressed a doubt of his ability to supply her with water, and under the influence of pride mingled with bigotry, had boasted of her descent from Jacob, from whom her countrymen had inherited the well; he told her, that whosoever should drink of the water he should give, never should thirst more; and then, after setting before her many illustrious proofs of his supernatural knowledge, he explicitly declared the person speaking to her to be the Christ. Thus amicably and effectually did our Lord enlighten her ignorance, and correct her prepossessions. He rebuked, but did not revile; he instructed, but did not insult.

Just before the woman was departed the disciples returned. They marvelled that he talked with the woman, and yet none of them ventured to say either to her what seekest thou, or to Jesus why talkest thou with her? Afterwards they prayed him to eat, and he answered, "I have meat to eat, which ye

know not of." They too, like the Samaritan woman, misunderstood the language of our Lord, and said, "Has any one brought him to eat?" But this eager question of the Apostles, which, at first sight, carries a specious air of tenderness, and respect to their Master, was mixed with a base alloy of aversion to the Samaritans. They were anxious to know, not merely whether their Master had eaten meat during their absence, but whether he had permitted the unhallowed hands of a Samaritan to present it to him. Gradually, however, did Jesus lead them also out of their mistake, and in terms most emphatical did he lay before them that truth which superstition had obscured, or precipitation overlooked. "My meat," says he, "is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

Now, in the answer which our Lord here gives to his disciples, we have an instance of the familiar and judicious way in which he conveyed instruction, by availing himself of little accidental events, and drawing his imagery from surrounding objects; and indeed this excellence has not only been remarked by Locke, Jortin, and other able defenders of Christianity, but seems to have been discerned by one of its most formidable adversaries, Lord Shaftesbury, when, having commended what he calls "familiarity of style in the more ancient parts of Holy Writ, he contrasts the vehement and majestic language of our Saviour in his gravest admonitions, or declamatory discourses with the parables, similies, and other methods of milder censure and reproof—with his exhortations to the disciples and

his particular designation of their manners—and with the *pleasant* images under which he often couches his moral and prudential rules."* Instead of having recourse to rhetorical harangues, and logical deductions, our blessed Master made the very senses of his hearers auxiliary to the operations of their reason. He taught them to associate the most obvious scenes, and the most common occurrences with truths the most momentous. What they had heard or seen at the moment—what they had been themselves doing—what they had observed to be done by others, were wrought into the form of a metaphor, which seldom could be mistaken by the most dull, or slighted by the most inattentive. Doubtless the writers of ancient poetry threw a fuller light upon the embellishments of their style by the circumstance of proximity between literal terms for external objects, and figurative terms taken from them. Socrates, the most sage and virtuous father of ancient philosophy is distinguished by the skilfulness with which he employed the little incidents of conversation, and the little peculiarities of manners, when he would elucidate the most obscure doctrines, and enforce the most salutary counsels. But the way in which our Lord is known to use this mode of instruction far exceeds all the graces which we find in these writers, who are justly allowed to have exhibited the finest models of composition merely human; and among the various ex-

* See Shaftesbury's Miscellaneous Reflections.—Miscellany 2, chap. 3.

cellencies which a reader of discernment may discover in the language of the Scriptures, the text, which we are now considering, will strike him most powerfully. The terms of it derive peculiar force from the recent and previous request of the disciples that their Master would refresh himself with meat. They resemble also the colloquial style of other nations in expressing that which we do with pleasure and satisfaction. Even in the most ornamental kinds of composition, imagery drawn from the senses of taste and smell, and the objects by which they are respectively gratified have been successfully employed; and the intenseness which nature, for the preservation of the individual, has given to the desire of allaying thirst and hunger, supplies very pertinent and very luminous terms of metaphor to express the most earnest solicitude of the human mind for the attainment of intellectual, moral, and religious gratification. The principle indeed, upon which as a question of taste, the figurative phraseology of my text may be elucidated and defended, lies deep in the philosophy of the human mind. It must be traced in the influence of contiguity and resemblance, in the successive and simultaneous, or I should rather say, in the separate and conjoint operation of the senses, and in the variously modified effects of such operation upon the affections, the imagination, and the language of mankind; and as some fastidious dealers in refinement are wont to display their ingenuity in cavils and sarcasms upon the style of the Scriptures, I have drawn up a series of critical illustrations, and metaphysical arguments,

far too copious, and perhaps rather too recondite for the present occasion. But if the view which I have taken of those principles be right, the metaphorical expressions used by our Lord, though borrowed from common life, and employed upon a most solemn and interesting subject, are at once intelligible without debasing coarseness, and impressive without artificial decoration. The images too, which are set before us in other parts of the narrative, whence my text is taken, rise naturally out of the events recorded there by St. John, follow each other in a clear and easy order, and form an assemblage of beauties most agreeable to our taste and moral sentiments, both from their variety when seen separately, and their harmony when surveyed collectively.*

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* The comic writers of antiquity frequently borrow their imagery from food,

Istic mihi cibus est quod fabulare. Plautus, *Cistell.*

Sapientiæ ætas condimentum est: sapiens ætati cibus est.
Plautus, *Trinumm.* Act. ii. sc. ii. v. 82.

So too Aristophanes, in the *Ranæ*, v. 757.

μάλα γ' ἐποπτεύειν δοκῶ,
ὅταν καταράσωμαι λάθρα τῷ δεσπότῃ.

"I seem to have exquisite food, such as is eaten even by the ἔποπται in the sacred mysteries, when I secretly curse my master." These passages, it is true, have a mixture of comic vivacity, and therefore may be thought somewhat unfit to illustrate, or at least to justify the grave language of Holy Writ. I shall therefore enter more largely into a vindication of the general principle upon which the expression of our Lord may be vindicated from the imputation of levity, or vulgarity, and

Proceed we now, in the second place, to consider the import of the text, as it may be applied to men, by whom virtue is both loved and practised as the will of God.

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after stating the opinions of some philosophical critics, I shall illustrate them by dignified passages selected from writers of the highest class. Mr. Burke admits that smell and taste have some share in ideas of greatness; "when," says he, "they are moderated, as in a description or narrative, they become sources of the sublime as genuine as any other, and upon the very same principle of a moderated pain; *a cup of bitterness—to drain the bitter cup of fortune—the bitter apples of Sodom*, these are all ideas suitable to a sublime description." Under a peculiar state of concomitant circumstances, the affection of smell, even in its fullest force, and when it leans directly upon the sensory, and so far is painful, may, while the sentiment stands not nakedly by itself, contribute to sublimity—

> At rex solicitus monstris oracula Fauni
> Fatidici genitoris adit, lucosque sub alta,
> Consulit Albunea, nemorum quæ maxima sacra
> Fonte sonat; sævamque exhalat opaca Mephitim.

And again,

> Spelunca alta fuit, vastoque immanis hiatu
> Scrupea, tuta lacu nigro, nemorumque tenebris,
> Quam super haud ullæ poterant impune volantes
> Tendere iter pennis, talis sese halitus atris,
> Faucibus effundens supera ad convexa ferebat.

Upon the former of these passages the critic tells us that the stench of the vapour in Albunea happily conspires with the sacred horrors and gloominess of that prophetic forest.—(*Sublime and Beautiful*, sect. 21. p. 157.) Upon the latter he has not said, what in conformity to his principles we may ourselves say, that the disagreeable quality is united with images of allowed grandeur—that the surrounding scenery protects what otherwise might be offensive or ridiculous—that the depth of the cavern, the vastness of the chasm at the entrance of it, the

When we reflect upon his glorious attributes, upon the various and endearing relation in which he stands to us, upon the exercise of his power

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black hue of the adjacent lake, and the thick darkness of the grove, co-operate with the destructive exhalation in giving dignity to the whole composition. In explaining the general agreement of the senses, he observes that the ideas of sweetness belonging both to taste and smell, are metaphorically transferred to sights and sounds, the objects of two nobler senses; and of taste he tells us that it is a term employed to express not merely "a perception of the primary pleasures of sense, but of the secondary pleasures of imagination, and of the conclusions of the reasoning faculty, concerning the various relations of these, and concerning the human passions, manners and actions"—(p. 30.) Let us pass on to the sense of smelling, the examination of which will throw additional light upon the operations of the other sense which we have been considering. "It is somewhat surprising," says Mr. Dugald Stewart, "that the Abbe Sicard should have overlooked the aid which the sense of smelling seems so peculiarly calculated to furnish for rearing his proposed metaphysical structure. Some of the most significant words relating to the human mind (the word *sagacity*, for instance) are borrowed from this very sense; and the conspicuous place which its sensations occupy in the poetical language of all nations, show how easily and naturally they ally themselves with the refined operations of the fancy, and with the moral emotions of the heart. The infinite variety of modifications besides, of which they are susceptible, might furnish useful resources, in the way of association, for prompting the memory, where it stood in need of assistance. One of the best schools for the education of such a pupil would, probably, be a well-arranged botanical garden.—(*See some account of a boy born blind and deaf, with a few remarks and comments*, p. 57. Again, in p. 43.)

I cannot help quoting here a very curious observation of Mr. Wardrop's, with respect to the partialities and dislikes conceived by Mr. Mitchell, in consequence of *the moral expression*

and his wisdom for the gracious purposes of kindness to us, upon the tendency of all his commands to lead us to good, and all his prohibitions to preserve us from evil, we must be conscious, that obedience to such a Being is not only becoming, but most agreeable, and that the performance of his will supplies that support to the soul, which meat

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which he seems to have attached to particular sensations of smell: "When a stranger," says he, "approached him, he eagerly began to touch some part of his body, commonly taking hold of his arm, which he held near his nose; and, after two or three strong inspirations through his nostrils, appeared decided in his opinion: if it happened to be unfavourable, he suddenly went to a distance, with the appearance of disgust; if favourble, he shewed a disposition to become more intimate, and expressed, by his countenance, more or less satisfaction." Remarkable it is, of a similar association between our moral feelings and the action of smell, we have an instance recorded in the Book of Genesis. Isaac had been stricken with blindness; he had sent his eldest son, Esau, to hunt for venison; Jacob, who personated Esau, approached the anxious and affectionate father; Isaac listened to the voice, and doubted; he felt the hands, and was satisfied; he bade his son come nearer to him —"He came near, and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of the field, which the Lord hath blessed." (c. xxvii. v. 27.) The Father of Poets, when he would represent to us the magnificent spectacle of Jupiter sitting on his ethereal throne, and shaking the great Olympus itself with his nod, has heightened the picture by a significant epithet:

> Ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερῥώσαντο ἄνακτος
> Κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο.

Thus, again, among the marks by which Æneas discovered the presence of his divine parent, we have not only the rosy-coloured neck, the flowing robe, and the stately march, pre-

does to the body—that it not only preserves as it were our existence as moral and religious agents, but invigorates our strength for every laborious task,

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sented to the sense of sight, but another circumstance, to be recognized by another sense:

Ambrosiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem
Spiravere.

So again, when the Oceanides visit Prometheus, he exclaims,

Τίς ἀχὼ; τίς ὀδμὰ προσέπτα μ' ἀφεγγὴς,
Prom. v. 115.

Where the Scholiast says, διὰ τῆς ὀσμῆς προνοεῖται τὴν τῶν Ὠκεανίδων ἄφιξιν. The examples here adduced abundantly shew that smell will supply images for that which delights the imagination, and that which interests the affections; and before I close this part of the subject, I may state with propriety that Oriental poetry is richly fraught with metaphors or comparisons, furnished not only by the variegated colours, but the sweet odours of flowers. The subject which we are discussing is, however, more immediately connected with the sense of taste, and therefore, after remarking, in addition to Mr. Burke's explanation of the word, as applied figuratively to the complex operations of fancy, judgment, and the affections, that in the Latin language *sapere* and *sapientia* are employed to express the noblest energies of the human intellect, I shall proceed minutely to examine the import of phrases used again and again by writers of the greatest celebrity. In Euripides we have examples where γεύεσθαι occurs figuratively, and as it may be worth while to observe, always carries with it an unfavourable, but very strong signification:

Ὅστις γὰρ οὐκ εἴωθε γεύεσθαι κακῶν. Hecuba, v. 375.
Ὡς ἄρτι πένθους τοῦδε γεύομαι πικροῦ. Alcestis, v. 1072.
Ἀτὰρ πόνων δὴ μυρίων ἐγευσάμην. Herc. Fur. v. 1353.
Τῆς σῆς δὲ τόλμης εἴσομαι γεγευμένος. Hipp. v. 663.

So too Sophocles has in the Trachinians, v. 1103.

Ἄλλων τε μόχθων μυρίων ἐγευσάμην.

It is difficult to pronounce whether the word in another pas-

and heightens our relish for every rational enjoyment. There is, we know, a spiritual as well as an animal life. Our minds, if considered especially in reference to the moral parts of our constitution,

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sage is to be considered as figurative or literal, and yet under either signification the image suggested by it is terrible and sublime:

Ἴτ', ὦ ταχεῖαι πολίμοί τ' Ἐριννύες,
Γεύεσθε, μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ.
Ajax, v. 854.

*Taste, drink their blood.* In a fragment which Stobæus has preserved, and which Palairet, of whom I shall make further use, has noticed in his observations on the New Testament, p. 58, Sophocles has also

Κακῶν ἄγευστος.

Γεύεσθαι is a term of sufficient dignity to have found admission into epic and lyric poetry with a metaphorical sense. In the speech of Æneas to Achilles, we read at the close,

Ἀλλ' ἄγε, θᾶσσον
Γευσόμεθ' ἀλλήλων χαλκήρεσιν ἐγχείῃσιν.
Iliad, L. xx. v. 257.

*Experiamur alter alterum.* Pindar repeatedly uses the word in a favourable sense, as in Pyth. ix. 61.

Γεύεται δ' ἀλκᾶς ἀπειράντου,

As Damm explains it, *specimen infiniti roboris edit, periculum roboris facit.* Again, in the Nem. iii. 74.

—— μυριᾶν
Δ' ἀρετᾶν ἀτελεῖ νόῳ γεύεται,

*Innumeras virtutes insufficiente animo degustat.* Again, in the Isth. 25.

Κέαρ ὕμνων γεύεται,

*Periculum facit hymni componendi*, i. e. *læte et volenter facit.* Again, in the Isth. i. 29. γευόμενοι στεφάνων νικάφορων, *Gustantes coronas victrices.* Herodotus, in the first book, uses γεύεσθαι τῶν ἀγαθῶν, and in the sixth book γεύεσθαι ἐλευθερίας. (See Notas Gronovii on the second Book, p. 90.) The similitude which subsists between the words of my text and a pas-

have, no less than our bodies, their peculiar sensations and faculties, and their causes both of nourishment and decay. Let us then briefly consider the resemblance which the effects of corporeal suste-

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sage in Thucydides, struck forcibly the mind of our learned countryman Mr. Wasse. In the speech of the Corinthians, in the 1st book of Thucydides, we have the following words: *μήτε ἑορτὴν ἄλλο τι ἡγεῖσθαι, ἢ τὸ τὰ δέοντα πρᾶξαι.* Wasse, in his Notes, cites the words of my text, and adds the following quotations from Origen and Sallust: *δῆλον ὅτι οἱ τὸ θεῖον ἐξηπασμένως σέβειν θέλοντες εὔλογόν τι πράττοιεν, μεταλαμβάνοντες τῶν δημοτελῶν ἑορτῶν· ἑορτὴ γὰρ, ὡς φησί τις καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν σοφῶν, καλῶς λέγων, οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν, ἢ τὸ τὰ δέοντα πράττειν,* Contra Celsum viii. 392. Sudorem, pulverem, et alia talia relinquant nobis, quibus illa epulis jucundiora sunt. Bell. Jug.

It is somewhat remarkable that, among the Latin writers, *fames*, when used metaphorically, bears an unfavourable sense, as *auri sacra fames*. *Sitis*, on the contrary, as a metaphorical term, is sometimes used favourably, and in one passage of antiquity, as in the words of my text, there is a direct reference from the figurative to the literal signification, which renders the figurative more bright and impressive. Thus, when distinguishing the *salsum* from the *venustum*, and the *facetum*, Quintilian tells us: "Sane ut illi in cibis paulo liberalius aspersus, si tamen non sit immodicus, affert aliquid propriæ voluptatis; ita hi quoque in dicendo habent quiddam, quod nobis faciat audiendi sitim." (L. vi. c. iii.) There seems, indeed, to be something unfavourable, where Horace says, in the Epist. xviii. L. i.) "Argenti sitis," and Juvenal, in Sat. x. "Famæ sitis." The verb *sitio* leans towards the unfavourable meaning of excess, where Cicero, writing to his brother, says, "Nec sitio honores, nec desidero gloriam." L. iii. Ep. iv. But the same writer, in his Oration for Plancus, uses the word in a favourable signification, "Deinde sitientem me virtutis tuæ deseruisti." In the way of comparison, but not of metaphor, Cicero thus writes in the book de Senectute in the person of Cato, Græcas literas senex didici, quas quidem sic avide arripui, quasi diu-

nance may bear to those of a well-disposed mind, and well-regulated conduct; for it may be found in their immediate, and more remote operations—in that which is conducive to pleasure, and that which

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turnam sitim explere cupiens." In the declamations, ascribed, perhaps improperly, to Quintilian, there is a passage, which Burmann has, by conjecture, made intelligible, and in which the metaphor of eating is used with some degree of dignity, "Neque enim ignoro esse quosdam, qui quamquam nomen sapientiæ facile atque avide, ut sic dixerim, dederunt." I quote the passage as it is printed, but "facile atque avide" are ill assorted with "dederunt," nor does there seem any necessity for the preparatory and apologetic phrase, "ut sic dixerim." But if we read with Burmann, "ederunt," the whole passage becomes intelligible and consistent, and is an additional instance of the metaphorical principles which I am endeavouring to elucidate.

But farther, the idea of a feast is, we know, often employed by the sacred writers in describing the kingdom of heaven; and the same train of thinking is found in Horace, when he describes the joys of the celestial regions,

Hac arte Pollux, et vagus Hercules
Enisus, arces attigit igneas;
Quos inter Augustus recumbens
Purpureo bibit ore nectar.—Od. l. iii. 3, 12.

Human life is by the Roman poets sometimes compared to a feast,

Inde fit, ut raro, qui se vixisse beatum
Dicat, et exacto contentus tempore, vita
Cedat uti conviva satur, reperire queamus.
Serm. i. 1. v. 117.

Lucretius had in his third book, said,

Cur non, ut plenus vitæ conviva, recedis?

Lambin, in his note upon the passage of Horace, and Wasse, in his remarks upon the passage of Thucydides, judiciously refer to an oration in Dio Chrysostom, where, with great copiousness and great splendour, the resemblance between life and a feast, and between men and guests, is represented in what Dio

is necessary to use. We are parched it may be with thirst, or we pine with hunger; we meet with some cool and refreshing stream, or with food at once wholesome, and delicious, and hence instanta-

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calls the substance of what he had heard from *ἀνθρώπου γεωργοῦ ἐν ἀγροίκῳ τινὶ ῥυθμῷ καὶ μέλει*, Orat. Charidem. p. 304. The comparison is pursued through many pages in many forms, but I shall content myself with citing two very brilliant passages as sufficient for my purpose: (p. 305.) *παραγίνεσθαι δὲ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἑορτάσοντας, ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν θεῶν κεκλημένους ἐπ'εὐωχίαν τινά τε καὶ θοίνην λαμπρὰν, ἁπάντων ἀπολαύσοντας τῶν ἀμαθῶν· κατακεῖσθαι δὲ ἄλλους ἀλλαχῆ, καθάπηρ ἐν δείπνῳ τοὺς μὲν ἀμείνονος χώρας, τοὺς δὲ φαυλοτέρας τυχόντας.* After describing the materials of the banquet, and the behaviour of the guests, he states as the result, that they who conducted themselves virtuously, were raised, by the will of God, from the pleasures of an earthly to the enjoyment of a heavenly feast: (p. 309.) *Ταῦτα οὖν ὁ θεὸς ἐπισκοπῶν καὶ πάντα ὁρῶν, ὡς ἐν ἰδίῳ οἴκῳ, ὅπως ἕκαστος εἰστιᾶτο, τοὺς βελτίστους ἀεὶ παρ' αὐτὸν κἂν τῷ σφόδρα ἀρεσθεὶς τύχῃ, μένειν αὐτοῦ κελεύει, καὶ συμπότην καὶ ἑταῖρον ἐποιήσατο, καὶ τοῦ νέκταρος ἤδη οὗτος εὐωχεῖται· τοῦτο δὲ ἔοικε μὲν τῷ τῆς σωφροσύνης πόματι· διαυγέστερον δέ ἐστιν ἐκείνου πολὺ καὶκᾳ θαρώτερον, ὡς ἂν, οἶμαι, θείας ὂν καὶ ἀληθοῦς σωφροσύνης.* Let me add one more passage, where the moral excellencies of men are displayed under similar imagery. When enumerating the sublime virtues of Cato, Lucan tells us in book the first,

Huic epulæ vicisse famem.

From profane writers let us pass on to the sacred. Our Lord, in a most solemn passage, says, Matth. xvi. 28. *οὐ μὴ γεύσωνται θανάτου, ἕως ἂν ἴδωσι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ.* The note of Palairet runs thus: "Frequentissime solent Græci verbum *γεύεσθαι* variis annectere nominibus, in *experiendi* significatione. Moschus, Idyl. iv. v. 10.

Τοῦ δ' οὔτις γένετ' ἄλλος ἀποτμότερος ζωόντων,
Οὐδὲ τόσον σφετέρησιν ἐγεύσατο φροντίσι κηδέων,

neously arises a sensation most agreeable. Let us turn from the body to the mind. Long have we desired an opportunity of controling some turbu-

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*gustavit dolores:* propius Leonidas in Antholog. Gr. l. iii. c. 25. Epigr. 15.

ποθεούσα ——— ἀδελφὸν
νήπιον, ἀστόργου γευσάμενον θανάτου,

*gustavit mortem:* id imitatur Tertullian. adv. Marcian. c. iii. v. 149, ubi sic de Elia loquitur,

*Qui nondum debita mortis*
*Gustavit, quoniam rursum venturus in orbem est.*" P. 58.

In Proverbs, c. iii. v. 8. we read, "It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." I do not insist upon this instance, because our translators have well observed in the margin, that the word *marrow* means in the Hebrew *watering*, or *moistening*. But you remember in the Psalms, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." (lxiii. v. 5.) The most beautiful instance is to be found in Isaiah, c. lv. v. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and that hath no silver, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy ye without silver, and without price, wine and milk: wherefore do ye weigh out your silver for that which is no bread, and your riches for that which will not satisfy? Attend, and hearken unto me, and eat that which is truly good; and your soul shall feast itself with the richest delicacies." — Bp. Lowth's Translation. Before many persons in this auditory it were unnecessary, and even indecorous, to apologize for critical discussion, when employed to elucidate and to vindicate the composition of the Scriptures.

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Addition to *Sweetness:*

This quality is, we know, applied to the charms of composition:

Τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ γλώσσης μέλιτος γλυκίων ῥεέν αὐδή.— Iliad.

Non satis est pulcra esse poemata, dulcia sunto.—Horace.

Fidis enim manare poetica mella
Te solum tibi pulcher,
Melliti verborum globuli.
Petronius in Proem.

lent passion, or indulging some humane and generous feeling—we have wished to show an enemy that we could forgive—to convince a friend of our sincere and zealous regard—to find occasion for clothing the naked, and feeding the hungry. Such an occasion presents itself—it is eagerly embraced, and the action is succeeded by an immediate and lively sense of approbation. We rise at the instant higher in our own esteem. We anticipate in imagination the applause of wise and good men. We aspire to the praise and sympathy of superior beings—if perchance such beings are allowed to behold what we are doing in this lower world. But above all we refer our conduct to the known will of Almighty God, and by the expectation of his favour our souls are refreshed.

Philosophers have often remarked the wisdom and the kindness of our Creator in providing at

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"The judgments of the Lord are sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb."—Psalm xix. "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and honey to the bones."—Proverbs xvi. v. 24.

Instances where γεύεσθαι is used with a dignified sense in Scripture:

Psalm xxxiii. 8. γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε, ὅτι Χρηστὸς ὁ Κύριος. Proverbs xxxi. 18. ἐγεύσατο, ὅτι καλόν ἐστι τὸ ἐργάζεσθαι. Epistle to the Hebrews, c. vi. v. 4. ἀδύνατον γὰρ τοὺς ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας, γευσαμένους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου, καὶ μετόχους γενηθέντας πνεύματος ἁγίου. V. 6. καὶ καλὸν γευσαμένους θεοῦ ῥῆμα, δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος. First Epistle of Peter, c. ii. v. 3. εἴπερ ἐγεύσασθε ὅτι Χρηστὸς ὁ Κύριος, quoted from the Psalms as cited above. Γεῦσις, a trial, or experi-

2 Macc. xiii. 18. εἰληφὼς γεῦσιν τῆς τῶν Ἰουδαίων

once for the safety and comfort of the human species, because for the most part objects injurious to our health are also offensive to our taste. On the other hand, where luxury has not debauched our appetites, that food, which is grateful to the palate is also salutary to the body. Thus too every good action we perform has a lasting and beneficial influence upon our minds. It provides for us an exercise that does not fatigue, and a gratification that does not corrupt, and in the simple but dignified language of Scripture, it becomes marrow to our bones.

That vice is most unwholesome to the soul we have manifest and alarming proofs, from the pangs of ungenerous repining at the prosperity, or personal excellence of other men—from the corrosions of malice, whether impotent or triumphant—from the importunity of pampered appetite—from the agitations of undisciplined wrath—from the tendency of all criminal indulgences to become insipid by custom, and noxious by excess—and from the numerous spectacles, which the world presents to us of debilitated youth, of comfortless manhood, and premature old age. But the advantage of virtue is, that it needs no allurements of novelty—that it fears no obstructions from satiety—that it delights in expectation—that it soothes upon reflection—and that for the rank and pernicious gratifications of sense, it substitutes the more unwearied and more permanent joys of an approving conscience. There is another point of resemblance not unworthy of our attention. For the guidance of the observer, and

in pity to the sufferer, the hand of nature has impressed many striking and many unequivocal marks upon all the varieties of disease, whether acute or lingering, to which the body is subject. But are not the senses employed—is not the judgment exercised—is not curiosity gratified—is not compassion, or indignation, or terror excited within our bosoms, when we trace by external signs, the disorders of the mind? Have you not yourselves had opportunities for tracing them in the tottering limbs, the restless fretfulness, and the tedious, painful, humiliating transition from a bloated to an emaciated form, by which coarse and inveterate sottishness is often visited, and marked out to the notice of the commiserating or disgusted spectator? Have you not traced in the wily glances, or the more direct and loathsome indications of unbridled lasciviousness—in the vivid flash of sudden passion—in the hideous distortions of rage highly inflamed—in the bloodless and cheerless aspect of hatred stifled by fear—in the lowering and immovable frown of malignity brooding over schemes of revenge—in the crooked and down-cast leer of cunning—in the arched brow of pride—in the swelling and sweeping eye of scorn —in the sickly languor of hope long-deferred—in the wan and withered visage of avarice—in the lurid cheek and piercing watchfulness of envy—in the studied and over-wrought grimace of hypocrisy—in the quick tremors, or fixed gloom of superstition —in the staring wildness, the haggard leanness, and ghastly pallor of despair refusing to be comforted by the tender assiduities of friendship, and deaf to the

mild accents of reason and religion, charm they ever so wisely?

But further, while in persons, who are careless about virtue, or callous to piety, every quality that adorns our moral character is gradually diminished, the privilege of habitual righteousness is, that it calls forth our best powers to the best advantage—that it leads to the right use of means from the right choice of ends—that it gives us steadiness without diminution of ardour, and alacrity without waste of strength.

Thus we have the direct evidence of experience, as well as the positive authority of revelation, for believing that the practice of every virtue has a favourable influence upon the general frame of our minds—that, like meat and drink, it not only cheers us for the present, but prepares us for the future—that it strengthens us with new might, and warms us with new fervour for greater and yet greater approaches to Christian perfection. Undoubtedly one good deed both enables and disposes us to do another, even when we have nothing higher in view than the applause of the virtuous. But our improvement is accelerated by motives, which, in respect to the complex powers and duties of men, may be called the most proper, as well as the most exalted, when our moral excellencies are cherished by a principle of religion—when we refer all our opinions to the word of God, all our actions to his laws, all our hopes to his favour—when our meat is to do the will of him by whom we are made, and are to be

judged, and to finish that work, which he has expressly appointed, and will abundantly reward.

I now go on in the last place to consider, in what manner our blessed Lord performed the will of the Father who sent him, and thus encouraged us to partake of that spiritual food, which giveth life eternal. Would we learn then from Christ himself, in what the will of our Maker consists, let us contemplate it in the whole tenour of his instructive and wonderful life. Did he fulfil that will by formal and pompous displays of superior wisdom—by austere and arrogant pretensions to superior righteousness—by solicitude for ritual observances—by dogmatism upon abstruse points of speculations—by a supercilious contempt of ignorance—or a ferocious intolerance of error? No; but the will of God, such at least as was that which he exemplified, is to be found in lessons of virtue, attractive from their simplicity, impressive from their earnestness, and authoritative from the miraculous evidence which accompanied them—in habits of humility without meanness, and of meekness without pusillanimity—in unwearied endeavours to console the afflicted, to soften the prejudiced, and to encourage the sincere,—in unshaken firmness to strip the mask from pharisaical hypocrites, and to quell the insolence of dictatorial and deceitful guides—in kindness to his followers —in forgiveness to his persecutors—in works of the most unfeigned and unbounded charity to man, and in a spirit of the purest and most sublime piety to his father and his God.

In the mind of this venerable Being therefore,

there must have been a peculiar capacity, a peculiar sensibility, or what has been forcibly, but not irreverently called by a pious writer, a peculiar taste for the excellence of virtue. Labouring, as we ourselves do, under many imperfections, and clouded as we are on many points by ignorance, we all of us discern a kind of fitness and lustre in rectitude and benevolence. But the fair proportions of holiness are more clearly understood, and more warmly admired by those who have made the greatest advances in Christian perfection. If therefore good men thus perceive the intrinsic excellence of virtue with so much satisfaction, what a firm and animating sense of it must have resided in the bosom of our Redeemer, encumbered as were his thoughts by no obstinate errors, disturbed by no unruly passions, and warped by no fantastic, wayward, and grovelling prepossessions!

You will farther observe, that the extraordinary part which Christ was ordained to act, and the glorious consequences which he contemplated as the recompence of it, must have been a continual source of joy to his most benevolent disposition. Do we not feel within our own breasts a sentiment of honest ambition to excel in wisdom and in virtue? Are we not conscious of a generous pride, when God has permitted us to be his instruments in promoting the happiness of our fellow-creatures? Does not the desire of obeying God imply a deeper and more active principle than the affection we bear to any abstract form of virtue itself, however gracefully pourtrayed by the skill of the philosopher, and however gorgeously imitated by the enthusiasm of the

poet? But if such be the case even with religious men, in a far greater extent must we affirm it of him, who had seen the Father.

Let the benevolent man consider what satisfaction he feels, when it is in his power to bestow any lasting or signal benefit even of a temporal nature upon one of his fellow-creatures. Let him then recollect that the blessed Jesus came to promote their spiritual, and most important interests; and therefore, that in proportion to the magnitude of his design, must have been the delight he received from the consciousness of ability to carry it into plenary execution. He indeed rejoiced, because his high commission was to announce the restoration, not merely of existence, for this is professedly admitted in many schemes of deism, and upon no principle of atheism itself can be disproved—but of such an existence as implied relief from all the sorrows, security from all the dangers, and recompence for all the toils, of our present condition—a recompence extended to all nations of all ages, from the beginning of the world even unto the end—a recompence adapted to beings who had been placed in a state of moral discipline, and had there acquired such habits of virtue and piety, as qualified them not only for the attainment of rewards proportioned to their merit, but for the fruition of those superadded joys, which are promised to us in the solemn covenant of Heaven's favour, and are there described with no less philosophical exactness than eloquent simplicity and conciseness, as the free gift of God. He rejoiced to see, not merely that the creatures, for

whose sake he came down from heaven, were destined to a future state, which even in the view of natural religion, antecedently to revelation, was not improbable, but for a state of felicity where, by the irrevocable decree of Omniscience, this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. He rejoiceed, that not only in his crucifixion, and in his various sufferings, he was to display a perfect and present model of patience and humility to his followers in their passage through this vale of tears; but that in his resurrection from the grave they would have an intelligible example, a credible proof, a consolatory and animating earnest, of their own triumph over the power of death, and of their own admission into the society of the wisest sages from all climes—the most virtuous men of all generations, the glorious company of apostles, the goodly fellowship of martyrs, and multitudinous hosts of angels and archangels standing before the throne that is placed in heaven—living themselves in the continual worship of him who sitteth upon the throne for ever and ever, and as they cast their crowns before the throne, singing to the harps of God the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb of God, great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, O King of Saints.

Let us ask our own hearts, with what earnestness, and what cheerfulness we engage in the service of those persons, whom we view with reverence or affection—when we are called upon to mitigate the sorrows of a virtuous parent—to promote the inte-

rests of a virtuous child—to supply the wants of a virtuous friend—to reward the merits of a virtuous man. But lighter than the dust of the balance is the excellence of man, when compared with the perfections of the Deity. Those perfections are ever present to the view of Jesus. He knew, say the Scriptures, what was in man. But more than this, he had pre-eminently the gift of prophecy, and alone understood all mysteries; filled with all the fullness of God, he was enabled to comprehend far beyond all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of knowledge, in that plan which, at sundry times and in divers manners, had been carrying on for the redemption of mankind. In a degree quite unattainable, and even inconceivable by our limited faculties, he knew what are the attributes, what the works, what the counsels of God. Knowing, he also loved them, and in that love he found motives for indefatigable activity in doing the will of his heavenly Father.

To conclude. The character of our divine Master thus viewed, will suggest to us some useful observations. Though many of the duties performed, and many of the pleasures experienced by Jesus Christ be appropriate to himself, yet the principle upon which he acted is, in some measure, common to him and to ourselves, and will be followed by corresponding effects. It rests, you see, upon a deep and rigorous sense of the transcendental dignity of holiness, and the supreme importance of the obedience that is due to the omniscient and merciful Governor of the Universe.

From the impulse of feebler and more precarious considerations—from the dread of worldly censure—from the love of worldly praise—from an anxious regard to our temporal concerns—or from the temporary expectation of future punishment, we may in external appearance, we may in a slight degree, we may, upon scattered and sudden occasions, attempt a few of the actions that are recorded of Christ. In all such instances we may seem to ourselves to have begun the great work of salvation, and to have made more or less progress in it. But in reality we are very far from having finished it. How so? Because in all such instances, it is not a direct regard to the will of God, which sustains and enlivens our spiritual frame. Looking at the whole constitution of our nature, as we are moral agents, I allow that certain subordinate and subsidary principles of virtue have their proper objects, and their proper use. But it is the fixed conviction of the understanding, it is the habitual disposition of the heart, it is the constant and complete discipline of our characters as Christians, which can only qualify us for the joys of futurity; and happy is it when all our wishes and all our powers are concentrated in the execution of that task which God himself has assigned to us.

Finally, it becomes us to look up with gratitude to that Redeemer who has done and suffered so much for our sakes, who presents to us so amiable a pattern, and holds out to us so ample a reward. If indeed we seriously venerate the Majesty of God, if we are sincerely thankful to Christ for his love to

mankind, most eager will be our efforts to express that veneration and thankfulness. We shall then make that very principle, upon which Jesus accomplished the will of his Father, the great rule of action to ourselves. We shall place religion not in a barren expanse of opinions, but in an abundant harvest of good-works—not in rash curiosity about mysteries, nor in tumultuous zeal for ceremonies, but in that devotion which is at once reverential and rational, and which, acknowledging God to be a spirit, pays to him a suitable homage in spirit and in truth—not, if we may allude to the metaphor of the text, in the artificial and luxurious repast which the vanity of man has prepared for the fastidiousness of the speculative, or his craftiness for the credulity of the ignorant, but in the better sustenance which revelation has prepared for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Guests, as it were, at a pure and plenteous, and hallowed banquet of benevolence and piety, we, by anticipation, shall obtain for ourselves that heavenly food, the partakers of which are exhilirated, not pampered—satisfied, not cloyed—nourished into strength to-day, and to-morrow, not oppressed with surfeit. Day after day, and year after year, we shall not only be strengthened in our spiritual life by the good we have already done, but shall feel our appetite for doing more much increased, and our relish for it when done exquisitely heightened. Our delight it will be to draw from that water of life, which is offered to us here; and it will be our ambition to dwell hereafter with that divine Teacher, whose meat it was to do the will of his righteous Father.

# SERMON XXXIX.

JOHN iv. 34.

*Jesus saith to them—"my meat, or my food, is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."*

IN a former discourse on these words, I laid before you some explanatory remarks upon several circumstances which occurred during the interview of Christ with the Samaritan woman and his disciples—upon the figurative phraseology which is frequently used in it—and upon some striking peculiarities in the mode of teaching, which our Lord employed upon this, and other occasions. Under the second head I examined how far the principle contained in my text is generally applicable to good men, who find pleasure in doing the will of God. I farther told you that, in the third place, I should consider the same principle more particularly in reference to the transcendental excellencies of our blessed Lord, in finishing the work to which he was appointed by the Deity; and that looking upon this part of the subject as more important than the preceding, I should make some preparatory observations upon sacred biography, as contrasted with profane, more especially as exemplified in the Gospel of St. John. These observations I shall now bring

forward, and then deliver the contents of the third and last head.

In this enlightened country we have access to great advantages from biography, without any diminution of their worth from the self-imposed rigours of the recluse, the romantic flights of the devotee, or the potent charms of miracles said to be worked for establishing this or that regulation in monastic discipline, this or that ceremony in external worship, or this or that article of popular belief. Far be from me the arrogance, and I add, the uncharitableness, of supposing that my discernment is more clear, or my sensibility more keen, than those of other men. So however it is, that by the authentic memoirs of English worthies, such, I mean, as a Cranmer, a Latimer, a Hooker, a Chillingworth, a Hale, a Beveridge, an Usher, a Tillotson, a Barrow, a Hammond, a Joseph Mede, a John Hales, a Jeremy Taylor, a William Baxter, a Robert Barclay, a Clarke, a Milner, a Berkeley, a Locke, a Boyle, and a Newton, the beauty of holiness, as exemplified in a Christian life, is quite enchanting to me, and in the language of David, knits my soul unto my God—yes, my brethren, more closely, I confess, than do the elaborate arguments, or the learned disquisitions, or the animated and elevated diction of our most celebrated writers in the defence of religion, whether natural or revealed. The agent himself stands before me, while I read his actions; my views of his character are not bedimmed by generalities, nor dissipated by extraneous matter. I feel as if every joint were fitly adjusted, in making increase

through the whole body unto the fulness of the stature of the true disciple of Christ. Wiser indeed we must all be on the amiableness, and the practicability of virtue, when it is practised so well; and by the natural transition of our thought from others to ourselves, we cannot fail in the moment of perusal to form wishes of being made better as well as wiser, not merely in conformity to any known and approved rule, but for the sake of resemblance to models which win our affection, or command our reverence.

Example is in all points of view more efficacious than precept; and by aid of biography, such as that which I have been describing, the power of example is brought home to our business, and to our bosoms. Conscious that no illusion is practised upon us, we derive the most unalloyed pleasure from real occurrences, and real personages—we hold a kind of ideal converse with our venerable countrymen, upon whom the grave has closed—we see their forms—we hear their voices—we honour them for their constancy through the trials of life—we admire their resignation in the hour of death—we anticipate the approving sentence of their Maker in the day of judgment—we imagine, or I should rather say, we feel that, seated in the sacred assembly of angels, archangels, and saints beatified, and the spirits of just men made perfect, they, at this very moment, are casting their crowns before him who sitteth on the throne from everlasting to everlasting, and that, raising their voices in the joyful and holy songs of heaven, they exclaim—"Worthy art thou, O Lord,

to receive praise and thanksgiving, and honour, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are." Rapt into ecstacy by the view of such Christian worthies, surrounded by such celestial glories, we voluntarily, or even involuntarily, say within ourselves, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

If, then, thus powerful be the effects of biography, as it relates to our fellow-creatures, how inestimable and inexhaustible must be the stores of knowledge laid up for us in the life of Christ himself! How much too would the honour of our religion be supported, and the salvation of our souls promoted, if teachers and hearers would dwell on those biographical parts of Scripture, which have not been stripped of their native beauty by the obliquities of casuists, the artifices of hypocrites, the dogmatism of bigots, or the wrangling of polemics!

Ever shall I disdain to depreciate the merits of a Roman and a Greek Biographer, whose works are well known to men of letters. The former is sometimes elegant as a writer; he is always clear as a relator; he is the sincere encomiast of good men, though unfortunate; and the dispassionate censor of bad men, though prosperous. The latter is curious in research, abundant in matter, judicious and sometimes profound in observation, often magnificent in imagery, severe in his moral tenets, and perhaps here and there credulous upon religious topics; and though misguided now and then by foreign testimony, on foreign occurrences, and in a foreign language, yet upon the whole he has been very suc-

cessful in farthering his professed purpose to exhibit what he calls images of virtue in illustrious personages. But neither of them approaches that lovely simplicity, that dignified ease, that saintly solemnity, that head-pleasing, heart-soothing, soul-thrilling unction, which every attentive reader, be he learned or unlearned, must to a greater or less extent, have observed in every one of the Evangelists. Such they appear when compared with profane biographers; and contrasted they may be with each other, on the soundest principles of criticism, and without the smallest violation of decorum.

To Matthew, Mark, Luke, let us promptly and largely adjudge the praise of diligence, fidelity, and veracity; but for that excellence which consists in giving distinctness of colouring, harmony of features, aptitude of position, just prominence of figure, and a diffused glow of life to the picture of an individual, the palm of superiority must be awarded to St. John. The meekness of his temper, and the exquisiteness of his sensibility, are not only recorded in the Scriptures, but extolled again and again by the fathers of the Christian Church; and when they are compared with the ardour of Peter, and the dutifulness of the other Apostles, they seem to have peculiarly qualified him for the preference given to him by his Master. Hence it is, that in the conversations which John recorded, there is often more copiousness of detail, and more tenderness of pathos, than we meet in many parts of the other Gospels. The miracles perhaps are not so numerous; but their absence is most abundantly compensated by dis-

courses of which there is no vestige in the other Evangelists, and which are pre-eminently characteristic of our holy Redeemer. Regardless, and in all probability ignorant, of the advantages given to style by studied arrangement, or polished phraseology, St. John, when he writes, seems, in nearly the very same degree, to have the very same impressions, which he experienced when he saw, and when he heard. Hence, as different occasions required a difference in his manner, he is calm without languor, or earnest without vehemence, concise without abruptness, or copious without prolixity; but always under the lively impression of feelings which, without effort, and without artifice, he communicates to every serious reader. The argumentative, the temperate, and as circumstances required, the indignant expostulation of Jesus with the Jews, who took up stones to cast at him—his interesting discourse with the Samaritan woman—his humane and instructive counsel to the offender caught in adultery—his serious conversation with the disciples, when he washed their feet, foretold who should betray him, and forewarned the impetuous and presumptuous Peter, that soon he would deny his Master—but above all, the long, the solemn, the affectionate addresses by which he endeavoured to console his followers on the approach of his crucifixion—these, my brethren, are direct and decisive proofs of the peculiar and unparalleled graces, which I ascribe to the Gospel of that disciple whom Jesus loved. How short, and yet significant is the description which the Evangelist there gives of himself! how honour-

able it is, and yet unostentatious! How superior it is to the most profuse and gorgeous encomiums! How well does it harmonize with the predilection felt and expressed for him by that Divine Teacher, whose food it was to do the will of his Heavenly Father!

The foregoing remarks will, I hope, enable you to understand more clearly, and to feel more strongly, what I have now to advance, in considering how far the principle contained in my text is elucidated by the transcendental excellencies of our blessed Lord in finishing with earnestness and with delight the work, for which he was sent from above. That by the wise and righteous laws of the moral world, virtue is upon the whole favourable to temporal happiness, is generally admitted by the most profound and impartial writers on ethics; and is it probable that such a teacher as Christ, suffering and acting for such important purposes, should be entirely and indiscriminately excluded from the benefit of these laws? The distinctions of wealth and honours, I grant, are usually included among the constituents of that happiness; but they become so only when they are accompanied by the consciousness that they were acquired without the commission of sin, and have been employed according to the strictest rules of moral rectitude. Nay, even among men, the voluntary sacrifice of these distinctions for the preservation of our innocence and integrity is justly considered as meritorious; and they who make that sacrifice have a stronger, and more lasting hold on the admiration and affection of man-

kind than the most successful s en, or the most splendid conquerors. Now, it was peculiarly a part of our Lord's character that he should accomplish all the high purposes of his mission by the *want* of external advantages, and by the example of resignation in such want; that the Son of Man should not have where to lay his wearied head; that he should be found in fashion as a man; that he should take to himself the condition of a slave, and finally submit to a painful and ignominious death, chiefly inflicted upon other men, who were in a state of slavery. Hence, with an exactness and a perfection far exceeding what is recorded of any other human being, he exemplified the celebrated maxim of the school of Zeno—"bear and forbear." The fourfold classification of virtue was nearly common to all the ancient sects; and if, according to the tenets of one upon the aggregate, and in a scholastic sense of the term, describing what in our prayer-book is called a right judgment in all things, and justly stated there as a gift of the spirit, prudence cannot exist without temperance, justice, and fortitude—nor justice, temperance, and fortitude without prudence—nor wisdom without the assemblage of all these qualities—then we, in Christ, have the real wise man, whom Chrysippus and his adherents extolled, when merely ideal. To that wisdom, manifested in temperance without austerity—in justice without severity—in beneficence, as a part of justice, without ostentation—in fortitude without excess, and in prudence without artifice, Christ added a meekness and lowliness of spirit, not incompatible

with constancy as a part of fortitude, and to these he superadded the purest, the most ardent, and the most sublime piety. Thus contributing severally and collectively to the completion not of his physical perhaps, but his moral dignity, all divine graces, in all their fulness, dwelt bodily in Christ—they dwelt in him virtually, as contrasted in the conception of the Apostle who used the word, with the Jewish temple and tabernacle—they dwelt in him *really*, as opposed to Jewish types and figures—they dwelt in him closely and indissolubly, so as to form a regular and entire body of perfection in righteousness.

Incredible then it is, that Christ should have been deprived of the comforts and assistances which the sense of his own merit must have a tendency to supply. Thus should we reason in the absence of external testimony, that when finishing the task assigned to him, he was inwardly sustained by the consciousness of unfeigned resolution, and unremitted efforts to finish it well. But taking the Scripture for our guide, we know that, in the mind of our Holy Redeemer, there was a strong desire, a *peculiar relish*, as a pious and learned writer has ventured to call it, for the beauties of virtue. Labouring then, as we ourselves do, under many imperfections, and clouded as our understandings may be by many errors, still we discern a fitness and grandeur in a right temper of mind, and a right course of conduct. They have been viewed in various lights by the wisdom of sages; they have been decorated in various descriptions by the eloquence

of orators; they have been happily represented by one celebrated philosopher under a compound term, where the fair and the good are theoretically displayed to us in the firmest union. Yet the exact proportion, the commanding dignity, the full and perfect beauty of holiness are more clearly understood, and more warmly admired by those who have themselves made the greatest progress in virtuous practice. But if good men see the intrinsic worth of virtue with so much satisfaction, what a fervent and animating sense of it must have existed in the bosom of Christ, encumbered as was his mind by no errors, sullied by no corruptions, seduced by no vain and fond prepossessions, disturbed by no unruly and tumultuous passions. Reflect on the wide difference of your own feelings, as you have acted differently through the various stages of your existence. Have not your minds been cast down with shame, and grief, and terror, when you supposed yourselves to have incurred the displeasure of the Almighty? Were they not sometimes soothed with calm reflection, and sometimes gladdened with rapturous affiance, when you were sensible of having endeavoured to deserve his favour? Remember then that Christ never incurred the displeasure of God, that in every thought, every word, every deed, he deserved the favour of God; and that the consciousness of thus deserving it must have been to him a never-failing source of consolation and triumph.

You will further observe, that the extraordinary part which he was to sustain, and the glorious consequences which he contemplated as the reward of

it, must have produced the most unmixed joy to his benevolent disposition.

To be deservedly of some importance in the estimation of wise and good men is naturally pleasing to that useful, and, I add, justifiable principle of self-respect, which the Pythagoreans recommended, and which seems to have been implanted in us as an incentive to praise-worthy actions. To be the instrument of the Deity himself in conferring some portion of happiness on our fellow-creatures, must give delight to every friend of religion, and exalt his views of human nature itself, as destined for such purposes. Hence we can ourselves realize in common life what in speculation we only believed. Indeed the direct and deliberate desire of pleasing God implies a deeper and a more active principle than the regard we feel for any abstract form of virtue, however adorned to our imagination by the ingenuity of the poet, or delineated to our reason by the sagacity of the philosopher.

Let him who hath visited the fatherless in their affliction—who hath caused the tears of the widow to be dried up—who hath poured balm into the troubled spirit of a friend—who hath refreshed the traveller when weary, hungry, and thirsty, his soul fainted within him; let him, who with his own hands hath bound up the bleeding wounds of the stranger that had fallen among thieves, and at his own cost hath provided for him the comforts of abode, and the aids of medicine—who in the darkness of a prison hath consoled the aching hearts of unhappy persons that have been abandoned by the

world, and the world's law, and are appointed to die—who hath done justice, and loved mercy, without taking any heed of the frowns of the sceptered oppressor, or hath borne witness to the truth in defiance of chains and dungeons, and the consuming flames from the armed inquisitor; let such a man tell us what he sees of comeliness and majesty in philanthropy enlarged and elevated by piety. When the desire of thus finishing the work assigned to a Christian predominates, all that our heads can conceive, all that our hearts can feel, all that our hands can execute, will be consecrated to the service of our Maker.

If then such be the case with religious men, in a far greater degree may we affirm it of him who had seen the Father, and by whom all the wonderful schemes, which at various times had been accomplished for the redemption of mankind by various agents, by patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and the Lord God himself, were distinctly and entirely known. Here then you may perceive the delight which our Lord must have experienced in doing homage to his Father, and in how very just and very exalted a sense of the term his food, his daily bread, his very sustenance may be said to have consisted in finishing the gracious task which he was commissioned to perform.

Individuals may have endowed seminaries for the education of the young or hospitals for the solace of the aged, the recovery of the sick, and the solace of the needy—sages may have formed systems of ethics for general benefit—legislators may have

established rules, with adequate sanctions to enforce them, for the order and well-being of society—orators may have stirred up an injured and virtuous people to vindicate their rights against the domestic oppressor or the foreign invader—heroes may have founded empires — patriots may have shed their blood in defence of their country—men of genius may have diffused knowledge, civilization, and national prosperity by discoveries, or improvements in the ornamental and useful arts of peace; but their merits are light in the balance when weighed against the high achievements which distinguish the Saviour of the world. He came down from heaven upon an errand most interesting to ourselves and our fellow-creatures. He was to rescue us from the degrading captivity and tremendous punishment of sin. He was to be our guide in the path of real happiness through life and death, time and eternity. The durability, not less than the extensive usefulness of the Christian religion, is a circumstance for which the Founder of it may justly claim superiority over all other persons, who have deserved well from mankind. Charitable edifices must perish—theories of ethics lose much of their celebrity or their influence from the successive conflicts of competitors for intellectual fame — laws, from the fluctuations of human affairs, are reversed or modified—empires are dissolved—states change their forms—civil rights, formerly reverenced, are soon infringed and destroyed—the productions of art and industry, once diligently cultivated and highly estimated, give way to others more prized; and these

in their turn are swept away by the devastations of war, or gradually disappear from alterations in public taste or public convenience. But the Church of Christ is founded upon a rock, and the truths of which it is the depository are adapted to all times, to all places, to all the real interests and all the real duties of social life. Christ himself foresaw, and in substance foretold, what I am now stating to you, and the prospect of it must have furnished subjects which, in the language of the Psalmist, satisfied his soul as with the choicest delicacies.

Much has been said, and by some writers of antiquity said well, upon that philanthropy which expands itself from families to neighbourhoods, from neighbourhoods to our country, and from our country to the whole human race. But even in the closet, though our talents may be exercised, and our imaginations for the time enchanted by the description of this comprehensive principle, yet the ideas excited by it are indistinct; and the affections, as embracing the whole range of our fellow-creatures, are excited very faintly. We cannot, from our limited opportunities for observation, understand all their interests, or all their wants. We cannot, from our limited sphere of agency, forward the one or supply the other. The attempt itself must be visionary and unsuccessful; or I should rather say, that from numerous and unalterable circumstances, it would often lead us into the neglect of many important duties which in reality are within our reach. I know not, indeed, that the experiment was ever made; and sure I am, that every scholar must re-

member, and every enlightened Christian will lament the imperfections of one celebrated worthy, whom his poetical encomiast has pourtrayed, as believing that he was born not for himself, but for the whole world.

Yet in the character and the views of the blessed Jesus, this universal concern for the welfare of the human race is set before us, and shown not in the refinements of theory, but with the solid testimony of facts. He did understand all the real interests of mankind, and he did endeavour to promote them. His religion, by making us virtuous, will, even on this side of the grave, make us happy. It teaches us to consider and to conduct ourselves as the heirs of everlasting life. As all men have immortal souls, he was the benefactor of all men in making such ample provision for the salvation of those souls. Let us, therefore, not listen to the narrow and unscriptural doctrines of those teachers who would confine the eventual benefits of Christianity to this or that sect, to this or that church, or even to that part of the earth in which the Gospel has been hitherto propagated.

The proclamation of mercy made by Christ extends, under various modifications, to the whole human race; for the whole human race have sinned, and stand in need of mercy. If the eternal salvation of mankind, and myriads and millions of moral agents, be in itself of such high moment in the moral government of God, how great must be the dignity of Him who was to execute the mighty plan; and what must have been the pleasure he felt in sur-

veying the wide and beneficial results of his divine mission! Let the benevolent man ask himself what satisfaction he experienced, when it was in his power to bestow any lasting or any signal benefit upon his fellow-creatures. Then let him recollect, that the blessed Jesus came to make us happy for ever; and therefore, that in proportion to the excellence and the magnitude of this design, must have been the delight he received from the consciousness of power to carry it into plenary execution. Have you not felt the glow of mingled admiration, gratitude, and love towards God, as exercising infinite power and infinite wisdom for the benefit of yourselves, your children, your friends, your neighbours, your countrymen, your fellow-creatures, through regions near and distant, and in already past generations, and in the present, and in many that are to come? And have not the same ardent and elevated sentiments attended your meditations on the same attributes, as communicating happiness to all intelligent beings in all the smaller and all the larger planets which roll around our sun, and in all the innumerable worlds belonging to all the systems visible or invisible, which by thee, Father Omnipotent, have been diffused through the boundless expanse of space?

Look, then, to your Redeemer. With the love of God's creatures, much surpassing what, by any efforts in practice, or any researches in theory we can reach, Christ united the love of God himself—yea, my brethren, the love of God with all his heart, all his mind, and all his strength—a love far exceeding

man's attainment, and perhaps even his comprehension; and in this love of an infinite Being, by whom he was himself beloved, he must have found support amidst all the miseries which he endured for the sake of those whom he came to redeem—amidst the pains of hunger, thirst, and cold—amidst the apostacy of many followers—the treachery of a disciple—the perverse cavils, and virulent invectives of Scribes and Pharisees—the brutal scoffs of the Jewish rabble, and Roman soldiery—the unceasing machinations, and unrelenting hostility of a wily, haughty, intolerant priesthood—and the excruciating pangs of death upon the cross. But further. Ask your own hearts with what zeal and cheerfulness you sometimes engage in the service of those whom you are accustomed to view with affection or respect—when it is in your power to mitigate the sorrows of a virtuous parent—to promote the interests of a virtuous child—to supply the necessities of a virtuous friend—to reward the merits of a virtuous man—is not your eagerness more keen, and is not your joy more rapturous, from the consideration of their moral qualities? Is it not the pure, the lovely, the magnanimous sympathy of your own virtue with the virtuous? But what is the most crowded and most resplendent assemblage of excellencies in man, when compared with the perfections of the Deity? Those perfections, then, you should remember, were ever present to the mind of Jesus. "He knew," saith the Scripture, "what was in man;" but he also knew what are the attributes, what are the counsels, what are the works of God. Knowing them, he

loved them, and in that love, he found subjects for unceasing admiration; he found motives to unwearied activity in doing the will of his Father; he found what, in conversing with the Samaritan woman, he called the fountain which springeth up to eternal life, and of which he who drinketh will never thirst again; he found, what, upon another occasion, he described to the Jews as the bread of life, which came down from heaven, and of which, whosoever eateth shall never hunger.

To conclude. The character of our Lord, thus viewed, will suggest to us some practical considerations.

Though many of the arduous duties performed, and consequently many of the moral pleasures experienced, by him in the wonderful work of our redemption, be appropriate to himself, yet the principles upon which he acted are in some measure common to him and ourselves, and will be followed by correspondent effects, when we meditate upon those principles seriously, and conform to them sincerely. If the wisest sage of antiquity justly deplored the misplaced talents of Greek disputants in separating the useful from the honourable and the becoming, greater reason must every reflecting Christian have to lament the errors or the sophistry of those writers who, under the pretence of discouraging superstition and persecution, would sever morality from religion. The controversies of antiquity on the comparative merits of this or that virtue, arbitrarily discriminated by this or that technical appellation, may induce us to suspect that the

consequence of such separation between morality and religion upon our spiritual life, would be an undue preference given to some habits of thought and action, while others equally, or perhaps more important are neglected—that decay in one quarter would be unperceived, while growth in another was over-valued—that tumour would be mistaken for strength, and the flush of excess for the glow of health. But from just notions of religion, mixed with enlarged views of morality, we should have no reason to dread the two evils, which the separation of them is professedly intended to avert; and indeed it is by such union only that we can arrive at that lively and constant sense of duty, which may enable us to resemble the blessed Jesus.

From the mechanical influence of custom, from the desire of worldly praise, from the fear of worldly censure, from a regard to our secular interests, from a terrifying expectation of future punishment, we may in a slight degree—we may in external appearance—we may on scattered occasions, perform some of the actions that are recorded of our Redeemer; but in such a state of things, the will of God is not the food which sustains our spiritual frame. No; it is the habitual disposition of our souls, it is the insatiable hunger and thirst after righteousness, which alone can fix our character as real Christians; and happy it is, when all our exertions are directed to the completion of that work which is appointed for us by our God.

In the stillness of the closet, and amidst the solemnities of the sanctuary, I have sometimes doubt-

ed, whether solid wisdom or sincere piety be much promoted by metaphysical distinctions, or critical refinements, or enthusiastic declamations on what is called the personality of that being in whom we all unfeignedly believe, as the promised Messiah, as the beloved Son in whom God was well pleased, as the crucified Redeemer, to whom, after his resurrection from the grave, and his ascension into heaven, hath been given a name that is above every other name. The disputant, whether heterodox or orthodox, may acquire renown for acuteness—the dogmatist may find opportunities for exultation—the zealot may be furnished with materials for annoyance; but the religionist is rarely improved in his reverence towards God, his good-will towards men, or even his personal conviction upon the general credibility of theism, or the practical efficacy of Christianity itself. Upon the nature of the ever-blessed Jesus, I am myself content not to be wise beyond that which is actually written for my learning in the hallowed oracles of God, and which, conscious of my responsibility to that God, I am accustomed to contemplate with firm assent and deep veneration. But his precepts, his actions, his virtues, these I contend, are perfectly intelligible to every attentive reader—they are perfectly credible to every impartial inquirer—they are most captivating when familiarized by reflection—they are most edifying when endeared by imitation.

Well then does it become us to look with reverence and thankfulness to a Saviour who hath done, and who hath endured so much for our sakes—who

presents to us so perfect a pattern of goodness—and who holds up to us so magnificent a reward in the kingdom of his Father. If, indeed, you seriously revere the majesty of God, and if you are heartily grateful to him for his love to you in your redemption—most earnest will be your inclination, most strenuous your endeavours, to manifest that reverence and that gratitude. You will then make that sound and comprehensive principle upon which Jesus obeyed the will of God, the sure and sole rule of your own obedience.

As moral agents you will place moral rectitude, not in giving yourselves credit for the sufficient discharge of your duty by restraining one passion, while you suffer others to exercise a capricious and imperious sway; but in striving to gain and to preserve a vigilant and steady mastery over every appetite, and every affection, which may endanger your innocence. As believers of Christ, more especially will you place religion, not in an implicit and infuriate attachment to controverted dogmas, but in unequivocal and substantial actions—not in curiosity about mysteries, or zeal about ceremonies, but in devotion at once fervent and rational, which, acknowledging God to be a spirit, leads to a suitable worship of him in spirit and in truth—not in the professions of your lips, but in the sensibilities of your hearts—not in starts of fanaticism, but in habits of virtue—not in ostentatious sanctity, but in genuine charity—not in spurious humility, disguising Pharisaical pride, but in perpetual efforts never to think of yourselves more highly than you ought to think, and in perpe-

tual resistance to those delusions which tempt you presumptuously to thank God, that by some peculiar and arbitrary illuminations of his grace you have been yourselves made what you do not suppose other men, and indeed nearly all other men living, to be—not, if I may be allowed to adopt the figurative allusion of the text, in the artificial and luxurious repast which metaphysical ingenuity has prepared for the fastidiousness of the speculative, overheated enthusiasm for the sympathies of the visionary, or priestly cunning for the credulity of the ignorant, but in the more simple, and therefore more salubrious food, which the Gospel has provided for the gratification of our best intellectual and moral faculties, and for the sustenance of our benevolence and piety. Day after day, and year after year, you will love every Christian virtue more ardently, as you practise it more constantly—you will not only be strengthened in the spiritual constitution of the inner man by the good which you have already done; but you will find an increased appetite for doing more, and an increased relish for it when done with sincerity and with alacrity. It will be your first and unceasing delight to drink from that water of life which is offered to you here; and it will be your highest ambition to dwell hereafter with that Holy Being whose food it was to do the will of his righteous Father.

# SERMON XL.*

ON GOOD FRIDAY.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 5.

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*

AT the opening of that solemn season in which the great Redeemer of mankind is represented as persecuted, insulted, and crucified for your sakes, it cannot be improper to point out to your notice those wonderful instances of his love, and to draw from them such considerations as may confirm our faith, and engage our obedience.

Plunged as we are in the business, or hurried away by the follies of the world, we seldom give way to serious reflections. The best of men think of Christ's mercies to them with too much coolness, and the worst, alas, never think of them at all. The more decent among us are satisfied with a general acquiescence in the truth of Christianity, with a profession of our hope in its blessed author, and with a faint acknowledgment of the obligations we have to him. But even in this partial, this occasional service, the thoughts of our hearts seldom attend the words of our lips. If we confess our own

* 1771.

unworthiness—if we assent to the sufficiency of Christ's merits to obtain, and the tendency of his precepts to forward our salvation, tell me, my brethren, are your affections inflamed, are your passions subdued—are your manners regulated according to that law of righteousness which his Gospel inculcates, his example most amiably recommends, his authority most powerfully enforces? If the same mind is not in you which was in Christ Jesus, in vain will you call upon God through his name—in vain will you profess to stand up in vindication of his honour—in vain will you lay claim to those privileges of his Gospel which are reserved for such as prove themselves his disciples in deed and thought as well as word—for such as walk before him in meekness of spirit and integrity of action—for such as with him renounce this world, and direct all their views, their hopes, their endeavours to that which is to come.

To rouse some of you, then, from that deplorable state of ignorance and indifference in which you have long perhaps continued, and to guard others from those fatal mistakes into which many persons are betrayed by claiming the promises of Christianity without performing the conditions on which alone they can be obtained, is the purpose of this discourse. I am sure all of you have an interest in this subject; I am sure you are ready to own it; would to God that the lowliness of your hearts, and the purity of your actions, were correspondent to that concession. If, however, you refuse your attention—if you sit unmoved at the enu-

meration of what a dying Saviour has performed and undergone for you sakes—if you listen unawed to the precepts and commands of him who brings with him the authority of an Almighty God, I am bound to pity and lament that obduracy, that ingratitude, that lukewarmness, which I cannot reform; but this I must add, that should you shut your eyes against the glorious prospect that the Gospel unfolds—should you deafen your ears to the repeated calls of mercy, the days will come, when that same Jesus, who is a source of consolation and joy to every disciple, shall appear to you endless confusion and shame—when you shall have nothing to expect from that goodness which you have neglected, and every thing to fear from that greatness which you have despised.

Every act of favour which Christ Jesus has bestowed on us, is connected with our moral deportment, and carries with it not less a direction than an encouragement for us to be virtuous. Hence the Apostle takes occasion to enforce the practice of patience and humility on his followers, by laying before them the amazing condescension, the submissive behaviour, the meek and humble mind of their spiritual Master. Were there no precept of Christianity to bind these duties upon us, the plainest dictates of common-sense, the first principles of natural religion, should induce us to discharge them. For what right have we to be proud, whose most extended period of existence is but a span long—whose brightest talents are degraded by infirmities inherent in our very nature—and whose highest vir-

tues are sullied by numberless imperfections? Or with what propriety can we fly in the face of Heaven, and arraign the equity of its dispensations, who have received from the bounty of our God all that we have, and more than we deserve—who can escape no danger by our own undirected wisdom—who can repel no evil by our own unaided strength—who can sustain no affliction by our own unsupported fortitude? My intention is to engage you to the performance of these essential duties by motives, which should at least have more weight with a Christian audience. I shall, therefore, follow the path in which the Apostle has trod before me; and endeavour to conduct you to the perfection of holiness by the unspotted, bright example of Jesus Christ. Let us then first consider in what instances his patience and humility shine out conspicuous, and then let us point out to you, by what means you may in your conduct shadow out a faint, imperfect imitation of them.

Humility is a virtue peculiar to Christianity. Philosophy extravagantly commended the dignity and intrinsic excellence of virtue, and consequently encouraged in its followers a spirit of pride, exultation, and self-sufficiency. The Gospel, on the contrary, makes a meek and humble disposition of mind the foundation of all righteousness. Hence those pathetic, those pious and gracious commendations by which Jesus distinguishes the poor in spirit; and his whole conduct was consistent with his repeated declarations. The Apostle has singled out that one great instance of this condescension, which in a

manner comprehended, and far surpassed all the rest. Christ, before his incarnation, was in the form of God. He was united to the Father by a principle of union utterly incomprehensible. He partook of God's glory and God's perfections. Yet in love to lost mankind, did he empty himself of this transcendent, this divine excellence. He was found in the fashion of a man—nay more than this, he did not make an ostentatious display of his dignity—he did not grasp at divine honours, as a prize to which he was certainly entitled—he made himself, on the contrary, of no reputation—he took upon him the form of a servant—and to close this amazing scene of condescension and benevolence, he became obedient to death, even to the death of the cross.

Our blessed Lord's family was poor, and his birth very obscure; he associated with men not distinguished by fortune or desert, by intellectual attainments, or elevated situation. With respect to himself he appeared in a character scarcely raised above the contempt of a giddy misguided world. So far was he from feeling any passion for riches and honours, that he lamented the infatuation of those who were dazzled by their glare. He professed in the strongest terms their utter emptiness and insignificance; he lamented the dangers to which they expose a weak understanding or a corrupt heart; and he inveighed with the most alarming severity against the follies, the vices of those whose superficial greatness the giddy multitude revered, and whose supposed happiness the generality of their inferiors were too much disposed to envy. He never affected to conceal his own poverty; he never shunned the incon-

veniences to which it exposed him, but submitted without a murmur to the scoffs of the proud, and the insults of the vulgar. From the poor he chose out the companions of his labours, and the partners of his sufferings. To the poor he preached the Gospel, and insisted too on this very circumstance as the most solid proof of its authenticity—the most distinguishing mark of its excellence—the most eminent instance of its utility. The admiration, the gratitude of his hearers, sometimes led them to load him with the highest commendations, and to force upon him the most illustrious honours; but he studiously declined all their intended favours; he artfully drew off the attention of his hearers from his own works to that piety which they owed to God, and professedly referred the praise of every pious precept, every holy action, every benevolent miracle, to the glory of him by whom he was sent into the world. Such was his condescension in those public scenes where his example was likely to have more extensive influence; and if we attend him in his hours of privacy and retirement, we shall find him engaged in the same acts of humiliation, and influenced by the same lowliness of heart. Every proud thought, every aspiring wish, that arose in the breasts of his disciples, he instantly suppressed. Though their acknowledged Master, he vouchsafed to become their servant; he repeatedly pronounced that servant to be the greatest in heaven, who had made himself the least on earth; he founded his own claims to their respect on actions which seemed most to forbid it; and in spite of the modest refusal, the well-meant opposition of

his disciples, he stooped down to wash their feet. Shall we then listen to the scoffs of infidels, who make the meanness of our Master's situation an objection to the truth of his claims; who call his condescension, meanness, and who dare to brand his meekness by the ignominious title of cowardice.

Would you know the full merit of such humility, compare it with the conduct of other teachers; go back to the boasted days of ancient wisdom and virtue, and bring me one instance of humility so amiable, so uniform, and in all respects so becoming. In vain will you search for it in the rigid austerity of the Stoic, the ostentatious singularity of Socrates, or the airy negligence of Epicurus. If your search is disappointed in the schools of the philosophers, pursue it in the cells of the hermit. He may deplore his own defects and unworthiness in the sight of God; but are not those defects mixed with impurity of desire? He may shrink back from the glittering advantages of the world, and despise their emptiness; but could he resist the bribe when offered him, or preserve his integrity uncorrupted amidst surrounding temptations? He may acknowledge the imperfections of his nature; but has he voluntarily submitted to those imperfections? Has he put off a more glorious nature? Has he left the joys of heaven, to suffer the miseries of earth? This elevation, this perfection of virtue, is to be found in Jesus alone.

Let us now bring forward that other part of his character, which equally ennobles our blessed Master, and equally challenges our love and admiration.

The natural calamities, to which mankind are exposed, are often subservient to moral purposes of the first magnitude. Distress sometimes serves as a punishment for past offences, and sometimes a kind warning against future ones; but the sufferings of the blessed Jesus were attended by no alleviating considerations of this kind. He had no sins to lament, no wicked inclinations to subdue, and yet was he harrassed by severer misfortunes than the most atrocious offender ever incurred. His distresses were not only considerable in themselves, but accompanied with the most dreadful aggravations. His virtues furnished materials for accusation; his acts of extraordinary wisdom and power provoked the most daring contempt, and rancorous opposition; and, what to a generous heart must have produced anguish intolerable, his kindest intentions were misinterpreted, resented, counteracted, by those very persons, for whose sakes they were formed. His sufferings were not merely productive of the most agonizing pain, but attended by circumstances of infamy, which the consciousness of innocence would have made more insupportable. Yet to those great, those numerous, those unmerited evils did Christ subject himself, in obedience to the will of his heavenly Father, and in concern for the salvation of lost mankind. In the first instance he should animate our imitation, in the second he claims our gratitude, and in both his conduct would produce its proper effect, did we seriously recollect how much he has done and suffered for us. What misery must Christ have endured,

and yet what resignation of mind did he preserve under it, when those moving complaints burst from his aching heart—foxes have holes, and birds have their nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head? Christ is prefigured to us, by the prophets under the title of a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. His patience too, as well as his distresses are there foretold, when we are told that as sheep before her shearers is dumb, so the reviled, the injured Saviour of the world opened not his mouth. Every part of his conduct fully agreed with these predictions; he was accused, but had no advocate; he was afflicted, but no man spoke comfort to his soul; he was persecuted, but no justice checked the hand of the oppressor. To accomplish the great purpose for which he was born, and to fill up that character of patience which he had long displayed to a wicked generation, he closed a life of misery with a death of shame. He, in whose mouth was no guile, submitted to all the infamy of a judicial condemnation; he who deserved the amplest rewards, far beyond the reach of human gratitude, incurred the severest punishment which the licentious malice of his enemies could suggest, or their power inflict; he who was the Lord and giver of life, subjected himself to the most painful and ignominious death. And for whom didst thou undergo this extremity of misery? for the Gentile, who had disobeyed thy Father—for the Jew, who rejected thee—for them, and every creature descended from Adam, subjected to his wretchedness and involved in his guilt. When, therefore, we set

thy counsels at nought, when we make a mock of thy name and spurn thy proffers of forgiveness, we surely know not what we do.

I come now to show by what means we may shadow out a faint, imperfect imitation of Christ's patience and humility. Pride is a stubborn root of the mind which seldom yields to the culture of philosophy or religion. No fault is more widely predominant, and none eradicated with greater difficulty. Men the most contracted in their sphere of action, the most contemptible in their talents, and the most profligate in their morals, are yet the slaves of vanity. They pride themselves in the profession of some imaginary accomplishment; they set a false value on petty excellence, or lay claim to approbation for the very excess of their faults. Did pride add only to the disgrace of vice and folly, we might be content to regard it with silent contempt; but when it sullies the brightest honours of virtue and learning, it surely deserves our most serious attention. Men of genius overrate their own excellence, depreciate the merits of others, and look down with sovereign contempt on those who are destitute of those talents, which themselves eminently possess, extravagantly admire, and no less scandalously abuse. Intoxicated by their superiority to the generality of the world, they too often aspire to independence on God; and by their conceited opinions of themselves, and their haughty treatment of others, they bring those very excellences into disgrace, which become amiable only by the prudence of the possessor, and respectable by their alliance with religion. On the other hand, men of lives otherwise unexceptionable,

disgrace their merit by the want of that humility which shades over even defects, and casts new lustre over every virtue. Considering themselves as the favourites of heaven, they judge too rashly of the faults into which their fellow-creatures are precipitated, and with no less candour of their own. Under this disposition of mind they consider themselves entitled to the richest favours of Providence; and should its judgment ever overtake them, they suspect injustice in the ways of God, and too often suffer the alacrity of their obedience to languish in proportion to the discontent of their tempers.

There is another effect of pride, which as it is expressly discouraged by our blessed Lord's Gospel, must not be omitted. I mean to speak of this hateful passion when it inflames the fury of resentment, and embitters the rancour of malevolence. Prudence, the love of peace, or perhaps a natural benevolence of disposition, would often incline us to forgiveness, were we not obstructed by our pride. It represents forbearance to us under the odious and contemptible character of cowardice, and by setting before our disordered judgments the insults of an adversary, or the contempt of the world, fills us with the most uneasy apprehensions. The man, therefore, whose mind is roused by a sense of injury, raises himself to an imaginary consequence, points the collective force of his rage against affronts which he but suspects to be intended against it, and suffers himself to be impelled beyond every boundary of prudence and duty through the groundless fear of insults, which acts of hostility only provoke,

and of slander, which true greatness of mind would enable him to despise, and which humility would teach him not to deserve.

All these kinds of pride does the Gospel expressly forbid; and the character of its blessed Author is calculated to inspire us with contrary sentiments. Though the Father had communicated to him all knowledge, he arrogated no praise to himself. Spotless as was his life, he disclaimed the name of God, even when his conduct unquestionably entitled him to that appellation, and the well-meant gratitude of his hearers disposed them to confer it. However insulted by the rabble—however derided by the priests—however injured and reviled by those whose best interests he was forwarding by the best means, he suffered not one angry reproach to fall from his lips — not one angry design to rankle in his bosom, and in the last agony of death breathed upon them a prayer and apology for his murderers. Christianity therefore requires of us, that we convert every intellectual or natural gift of God into a moral good, and that we dedicate it to the service of its Author and the happiness of his creatures. If we have learning it should be employed in informing the ignorant, and rectifying the mistakes of our brethren. Should we have riches or power, it is our duty to possess them with humility, and to apply them with prudence and integrity. When our efforts, aided by the grace of God, have raised us to some eminence of virtue, we should endeavour to draw after us the love as well as [illegible] of the

world—to exhibit our good actions in the most amiable point of view—and to extend the influence of our good qualities by their association with humility—and by showing the effects of religion on our thoughts as well as lives, to win others to imitation. In a word, would we conform to that lovely pattern which Christ has set us, we must encourage the most charitable thoughts of our neighbours, and the most humiliating of ourselves. We must be benevolent to our friends, merciful to our enemies, respectful to our superiors, kind to our equals, and courteous to all mankind. It were amply worth our while to cultivate this frame of mind, had we in view only that serenity and peace which it immediately produces; but humility is productive of yet happier consequences. It attracts the love of all good men, and seizes the admiration even of the bad. It guards us from those indignities to which a haughty carriage, or a contentious temper lays men open; or should any injury be offered to us, or should any calamity ever overtake us, the general sense of the world will rise in our favour, and we shall find numbers ready to assert our innocence, and to promote our security. Above all, it entitles us to the approbation of Almighty God, and animates with the most comfortable expectations of his descent to judgment, who will distinguish, doubtless, by the most ample recompence, that virtue which was the most characteristic ornament of his own most exemplary life.

There is a peculiar propriety in the stress which the Gospel lays upon humility. When we are once pos-

sessed with a proper sense of our own unworthiness, and of God's excellence, we see at once the necessity of our obedience to his will, and we feel the strongest motives urging us on to the performance of every other duty. On this basis the whole superstructure of a Christian is laid with the greatest security, and may be raised to the highest degree of perfection. Hence it is that humility leads us to the other virtue, to which the Apostle engages us, and enables us to practise it in its utmost extent. The sufferings of Christ were both in kind and degree such as no man ever endured. If then he endured them with tranquillity of mind—if he became subject to them for the sake of encouraging our patience and forwarding our everlasting happiness, it surely becomes us not to oppose his gracious purposes towards us.

The miseries that are brought upon us in our present state of imperfection, are frequently derived from our own imprudence or misbehaviour. Where this is the cause, it were the extremity of wickedness to charge on God's severity that very distress which is an effect of his mercy, and which could not have taken place in any degree, had not our conduct deserved chastisement. If they be intended only for the trials of our virtue, we are destitute of all prudence, we are lost to a just sense of our own interest in depriving ourselves by impatience of those many blessings, which patience extracts from the bitterest afflictions. Though his hand lies hard upon us—though he has vexed us with his storms, we are yet forbid to renounce our subjection to him, or to despair of his mercy, when it is just and fit

for us to be the objects of it. Immediate consolation will flow in upon us if we call to mind the gracious purposes he accomplishes by our misfortunes, and the many alleviations by which even the heaviest calamity become less intolerable. Relief may be in store for us on this side of the grave; and should it be refused here, we may be assured that the highest rewards are treasured up for our patience hereafter. The recollection of those afflictions with which we have struggled—all the sufferings under which we have laboured, will then redound to our greater comfort. All tears will be wiped from all faces for ever, and we shall experience the happy accomplishment of that promise by which our Lord encouraged his disciples to patience and resignation, when he said that "your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

To direct us to the exercise of this patience, the Gospel sets before us the example of Christ. No man like him felt the pangs of disappointed benevolence, of traduced innocence, and of insulted dignity. No man was equally exposed to the miseries of poverty, to the insolence of wealth, to the affronts which pride casts on patient merit, to the distresses which oppression heaps on the friendless and unprotected.

It becomes us rather to observe his strict injunction to qualify ourselves for his mercies by an implicit submission to his will, to conform ourselves in all respects to his example, and in every sentiment of our hearts, every action of our lives, to be of the same mind which was in the Lord Jesus.

In the consequences of his virtues, we may discern an earnest of that recompence which our own will at last receives. The Scriptures inform us that God raised his blessed Son to higher glory in consequence of his holy life, his obedience towards God, and his benevolence towards man. Now the whole analogy of the Gospel obliges us to confine these rewards to the human condition of Christ. His divine nature, indeed, was essentially incapable of increase or diminution; but his human might be distinguished by greater or less instances of virtue, by higher or lower degrees of glory. In this nature he accomplished their salvation by the purity of his precepts, the righteousness of his conduct, and by that merciful atonement which his death on the cross effected for the sins of the world. To this nature therefore, is the recompence which the Gospel describes in such exalted terms necessarily confined: and thus bestowed, it becomes an additional proof of the value God sets upon virtue, and the strongest encouragement for us to practise it. The whole system of revelation tends to crush every struggle that pride can make in defence of vice. It informs us of the utter inability we labour under to supply our own wants, to gratify our most innocent desires, or guard against those dangers to which our tranquillity, our safety, nay our very being are hourly exposed. It informs us, that our most consummate wisdom is foolishness in the sight of God —that our most boasted accomplishments shrink to nothing when compared to his perfections—that our best services, so far from entitling us to the appro-

bation of an infinite God, barely screens us from his displeasure. It informs us, above all, that if Christ had not lived, we must have been left in a most deplorable state of ignorance about the nature of our duty—that if he had not died the most strenuous endeavours to perform it must have been inefficacious. By presenting this view of our own wretchedness, it puts a check on the rebellious, presumptuous spirit of man, and it invites us to contemplate this character of Christ, in order to inspire us with better and juster sentiments.

If then we raise up within ourselves a spirit of humility and meekness—if we resign to every appointment of Providence with tranquillity and cheerfulness, we shall have acted up to the commands of our blessed Master, and advanced in our imitation of him to the highest summits of virtue which man can reach. We may be secure of admittance into those mansions where our imperfections will be removed, our pious purposes strengthened, our capacities of moral excellence enlarged, and where, by endless progression in holiness, we shall be growing more and more to the fulness of the stature of the man of God.

We may then look to that hour when the Christian warfare shall be succeeded by the Christian triumph—when our patience will be rewarded with the most transporting happiness, and our humility crowned with the most exalted glory, if the same mind, the same heart, be in us which was in Christ Jesus.

# SERMON XLI.*

ON BENEVOLENCE.

MATTHEW xxii. 39.

*And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

THOUGH the authority by which Religion demands our obedience is peculiar to itself, yet the precepts by which it regulates our conduct, are founded on the great and immutable laws of rectitude, on the constitution of human nature, and on the correspondence of that constitution with the various events of human life. The Scriptures, it is well known, accommodate their phraseology to the apprehensions of the bulk of mankind, who have neither leisure nor ability for profound research and accurate discrimination. They direct us to practise such duties as are approved by every uncorrupt person to whom they are proposed. But they neither amuse our curiosity nor exercise our judgments by investigations into final causes, nor by curious disquisitions upon the absolute and comparative force of our affections, and upon the appearances which they exhibit in a mixed or in a separate

* 1789.

state. These disquisitions and those investigations are indeed properly and solely the province of our own reason; and when conducted with a serious regard to the discovery of truth and to the interests of virtue, they illustrate the propriety of every rule which Christianity has laid down for the improvement of our minds, of every check which is thrown upon our unsocial or selfish pursuits, of every command which is given to purify and elevate the soul by the love of God, or to soften and expand it by the love of man.

In the chapter of the text a lawyer, or one of those persons who professed to be skilful in the law of Moses, and to resolve any difficulties concerning it, had, for the purpose of tempting Christ, inquired of him, "what was the first commandment?" He thought, probably, that the founder of a new religion would betray some freak of singularity, or some sally of zeal in a new dogma, which might invalidate the pretensions, or contradict the precepts, of the Jewish Legislator, and if such a dogma had been brought forward, he was prepared, no doubt, to represent Jesus as a teacher who subverted the established notions of morality, and encroached upon the sacred authority of the law. He received, however, an answer which equally disappointed his cunning, and mortified his malevolence; for Jesus said to him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On

these two commandments hang the law and the Prophets.

Now the words of the second commandment, which, no less than those of the first, were so judiciously adapted to the particular occasion upon which our Lord pronounced them, point out also the benevolent character which pervades every part of the Christian dispensation itself, every end for which it professes to be designed, and every direction which is employed to attain it. When explored to their deepest principles, and pursued to their most remote consequences, they reconcile us to the appointment of that physical evil, which, in the present constitution of things, is necessary even to the production of moral good. They show that all our better affections may be so improved, and our lower so corrected, as to become severally instrumental in working out the utmost possible happiness which in this mixed and imperfect state is placed within our reach. And this will appear plainly to every one who considers the importance, the extent, and the purity of benevolence, as taught in the Scriptures. For when Jesus connects the love of our neighbour with the love of God, he shows that piety is defective and unavailing without active virtue. When he represents the love of ourselves as the measure of our love to others, he carries up our best social faculties to their highest point of excellence. When he directly enjoins the exercise of the benevolent affections, he indirectly forbids the indulgence of the malignant; for his words, you will do well to observe, refer to a passage, in which those affections are openly con-

trasted, and in which the one are expressly condemned, and the other as expressly approved. "Thou shalt not avenge, says Moses, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Of this duty then we cannot admit that it makes only a subordinate and incidental part of our Lord's instructions; for it is inculcated by him repeatedly, and under circumstances too, which mark its importance more distinctly than if it had been stated merely in the form of a general declaration that Moses had so taught, or of a general direction that we should so act. It was produced, you see, for the confutation of the insidious lawyer, who questioned Christ upon the great fundamental articles of religion. It was produced and explained to the confusion of the rich young man, who supposed himself to have kept all the commandments from his youth up, and yet was deficient in the true spirit of charity. It was produced to the satisfaction of the ingenious scribe, who inquired seriously, who answered, say the Scriptures, discreetly, and was by Jesus Christ himself pronounced to be not far from the kingdom of God. It is called a brief but comprehensive saying by St. Paul. It is dignified by the title of the royal law in the Epistle of Saint James. In short, it appears, both in the estimation of Christ and his Apostles, to have been the test of all faith, and the very bond of all virtue.

Religion can only be considered as a great mean of some great end; that end, whether you view it as a physical effect, or a moral reward of an improvement,

must be happiness; and that happiness, if, according to the full import of the precept, we loved each other, would be most successfully promoted, most widely diffused, and most surely enjoyed. But in vain should we be commanded to love our neighbour, unless we were placed in a situation where that love could exert itself, unless our reason distinctly perceived the fitness of such exertion, and unless the impulses of our own minds concurred with the authority of Revelation, in cherishing and supporting the principle of benevolence. There is, however, a mischievous and deceitful kind of philosophy, the patrons of which indulge their spleen, or display their sagacity, in the most humiliating descriptions of human nature. The very same men who would prepossess us against Christianity, as a gloomy and a degrading system, have endeavoured to weaken the ordinary, and, in truth, the most efficacious obligations to virtue, by showing that we are incapable of being virtuous—that in every attempt we make to deserve the approbation of our own minds, we are under the secret, though irresistible influence, of self delusion—that our supposed excellencies are real imperfections—that our social affections are only modifications of the selfish—that it is impossible for us to love our neighbour sincerely and purely—and that every action by which we mitigate his sufferings, or promote his well being, proceeds from the love which we latently and indirectly bear to ourselves. But if the opinions of these writers be well-founded, the precept of our Lord would doubtless be frivolous, and even insulting. It

would set our characters, as Christians, at variance with our conditions as men; and, under the pretended sanction of God's authority, it would seem to impose a duty which God himself has not enabled us to fulfil.

In order, therefore, both to illustrate and to justify the precept of loving our neighbour as ourselves, I shall first endeavour to show that a principle of benevolence really exists in the human mind.

Secondly, I shall inquire in what manner that principle is formed; and I shall adopt and defend the opinion of those philosophers who deduce it, not from instinct, but association.

Thirdly, I shall consider the degree in which it operates, both as an affection and a duty.

Fourthly, I shall trace out the respect which it bears to the whole of our nature.

Lastly, for reasons which will hereafter be mentioned, I shall correct some mistakes, and obviate some objections, which have arisen upon the qualities and extent of benevolence, part, it may be, from the ambiguities of language, and part, I fear, from the refinements of speculation.

The limits assigned to discourses from the pulpit, will prevent me from delivering all the observations which I have had occasion to make in this comprehensive, and, I hope, not inaccurate view of the subject; and as some of them lie rather removed from the train of thinking usually pursued in sermons, I have the consolation to reflect that such parts may be omitted * without any inconvenience. I have therefore selected the first and the last heads

* The whole is here printed.

as most proper to be produced, and from the discussion of them, either in this or a subsequent discourse, I shall find opportunities for passing on, to that important branch of the virtue which is more immediately connected with the purpose of our present meeting. Let me, however, premise that upon a topic which has been so often and so ably discussed, every attempt at novelty would argue the weakest affectation, or the most offensive arrogance. You will, therefore, consider the opinions which I am going to lay before you as the result of my own impartial inquiry and serious reflection. They will not be recommended by any artifices of refinement, or any splendour of declamation. They are to be appreciated only by their truth and their importance; and they will be addressed not to the tumultuous and transient emotions of your passions, but to the calm and sober suggestions of your reason. First, then, I shall shew that the principle of benevolence does exist in the human mind.

In many inquiries which relate to the natural course of external things we are for a time perplexed, either by contrary and irreconcileable appearances, or by sudden deviations frem the general order, or by some minute and singular circumstance which deters us from assigning the phenomenon to any general and known class. So secret, indeed, and so intricate are the operations of causes which are totally independent of human agency, that our propensity to apply some received principle to a fact hitherto unexplained, is itself a fruitful source of error; and hence it has been remarked, that among

many solutions which may be offered, the antecedent probability lies in favour of that which would be first rejected by a superficial observer, and which occurs last even to the most attentive. But when we would examine what passes in our own minds—what is subject to our own understanding and will—what is to govern our own behaviour—and to determine our own happiness, the cause which more immediately presents itself is generally the true one; and though very recondite and very subtle explications may gratify our vanity, they for the most part mislead our judgements. We are made indeed for action, not for knowledge; or rather for knowledge, so far as it affects action, and therefore we are most interested, as we are also most qualified, to know ourselves; and are guided by the united force of observation and sympathy, to ascribe the same faculties and the same affections to our fellow creatures.

Now the general consent of mankind, as to the reality of benevolence, can only be the result of general experience. About the motions of bodies, or about the composition and energy of material objects, we may be deceived by the most striking appearances. Nay, upon the causes by which men are sometimes actuated, we, in particular instances, may be at a loss to decide, because our general rules are suspended, and because the very same experience which forms them, prepares us to suspend them by the imperfections of the best and the errors of the wisest men, by the sudden starts of caprice predominating over reason, and by the influence of casual situations, unknown indeed to the observer, but

powerful enough to drive off the agent from the ordinary bias of his temper. But in speaking of benevolence we are describing surely our own real feelings, and though the motives of men, being sometimes mixed, escape our notice, even while we are acting from them, reflection easily separates those which were at first blended, and enables us to analyze them, however complex, into their primary and constituent parts. He that mourns for the sufferings of a man by whose counsels he has been directed in difficulty, by whose beneficence he has been supported in distress, or by whose kind and assiduous attentions he has been consoled in the pangs of sickness or under the pressure of sorrow, may be supposed to intermingle some considerations of his own private happiness, to anticipate the loss of every fond endearment, every generous exertion, which he once experienced, and which he now remembers with the more painful anxiety, because he is to experience them no more. But reverse the case, and imagine the benefactor to stand in sad and silent anguish over the sufferings of him to whom he has formerly shown kindness, without the prospect of return. In this instance surely sympathy is the effect of mere unmixed benevolence, and so far as it is invigorated by the recollection of services performed, it shows only the force of the principle, which clings to its object with tender solicitude, when the power of supplying relief is for ever lost. If this be resolved into the mechanical power of habit, I must ask—the habit of what? and the obvious answer is—the habit of loving and of being beloved, where mutual bene-

volence is included—the habit of doing kindness without receiving it, from which every direct and every indirect kind of selfishness is alike excluded. But even in the former case there is at least a portion of benevolence, and except in the basest minds it is such a portion as outweighs every regard to our own personal interest. Subsequent reflection, I allow, may bring that interest steadily and coolly within our view, and where the tempers of men are radically and habitually selfish, it may at last absorb every other consideration. But in the first agonies of grief we perceive only the distress of him that relieved us—we feel our thoughts rebound from all future concerns of our own to the concerns of another which lie before us—we form hasty and vehement wishes to afford some alleviation; and we are pained at not having the ability because we have the inclination to afford it effectually The whole of this question is to be considered then as a question of fact, and consequently must be determined by a number of actions, which, though performed under different circumstances, directed to different external objects, and blended perhaps with different external perceptions, are, in part, materially and formally the same, and are therefore ascribed to the same common principle.

Now we are all conscious of having done acts of kindness for the sake of others, and this consciousness, let me add, has at some time or other, or in some degree or other, existed in the most vicious natures. They have felt, it may be, the glow of filial or parental affection—they have been melted

at the sight of distress in the partner of their unlawful love—they have exulted in the prosperity of their associates in wickedness, even when they had no share in the spoil—they have been themselves the objects of relief, from a friend, or a neighbour, or a stranger—and they have felt some faint emotions of gratitude, which is itself a species of benevolence, and which is never excited, unless we ascribe the kindness conferred to a benevolent motive.

But do we not see many shocking instances in which the unsocial affections break out to the annoyance of the unoffending, and even the destruction of the helpless? Unquestionably; and we also should see them rage more frequently and more fatally, if the social were cold and sluggish. But though our sense of pain be more acute than the sense of pleasure, we must not conclude, that what inflicts the one has upon the whole a wider and a greater efficacy than what produces the other. We must not forget that the malignant passions tend ultimately to correct themselves by tormenting the possessor; and that the benevolent acquire fresh strength from every fresh gratification.

Indeed it has been justly maintained that, in the absence of rancorous envy or confirmed resentment, positive ill-will can have no place in the breast of man. During the eager pursuit of some end in which our own seeming good is concerned, we may be oppressive and perfidious; but we cannot feel a love for oppression and perfidy as such, and we have a kind of instinctive perception, that, if the same end

could have been attained by different means, we should readily have employed them. Here then the heart pronounces in favour of the good of others as an object upon the whole preferable.

The degree in which benevolence operates is certainly different in different men, and in the same men it is different at different times. But be it ever so transient and ever so rare, it is always accompanied by a pleasure equal, if not superior, to that which attends the gratification of our other desires; and by a sentiment of self-approbation, so firm and so unequivocal as to exclude all possibility of mistake. By the very frame of our nature we are impatient of the contrary feeling, and therefore if we forbear to do good when it is in our power to do it, we try to escape from the sense of our own unworthiness—we seek for excuses to justify the omission—we veil over unfeelingness with the name of prudence—or we affect to show our discernment in imputing to the object some defect, which rendered him undeserving of our regard. But in the exercise of benevolence there is a simplicity which finds no occasion for such evasions, and which rests in the motive to act, and in the action itself, with undissembled and undiminished affiance. The conduct of men in these opposite situations carries, I must confess, to my mind the clearest conviction. When we really are selfish, we would appear to ourselves and to others benevolent; and when we are internally benevolent we have no suspicion of having been selfish. I say not, that in our beneficent actions, selfish motives are never included; but I do

say, that this very fact supplies a test for deciding when they are not included. For, as the existence of such motives is known by immediate consciousness, or by reflection; from the absence of such knowledge, we may, in any case, infer the absence of such motives. Again, if in a sudden burst of passion, or from the deliberate suggestions of malice, we have done evil to another, yet we soon shrink from the remembrance of our own deformity—we involuntarily refer even a cruel action to the standard of benevolence—we frame various pleas to satisfy ourselves that we have not deviated from it very far—and, in the failure of those pleas, we suffer the keenest and most unabated compunction. Thus the influence of our better affections returns upon us after we have indulged the worst, and every transgression of our duty leads to a new and additional proof of the importance of the duty itself.

The clear and intelligible distinctions which have been made about a general and a particular benevolence are themselves proofs of its reality; for what we are able thus to distinguish we must know to be real, and in proportion as the subjects of distinction are multiplied, they evince more strongly the existence of the affection which is thus diversified and dilated. There is a general benevolence quite independent of friendship, of connection, of personal esteem, and in consequence of which we are not totally indifferent to the happiness and misery of others, but perceive some kind and some degree both of satisfaction in their enjoyments, and of uneasiness for their sorrow—enjoyments, be it ob-

served, which bring with them no actual or even ideal advantage to ourselves, and sorrows from which we suffer and apprehend no inconvenience. There is also a particular benevolence which arises perhaps from the experience of kindnesses performed to ourselves, or from a sense of merit in others, or from a consciousness of our own close and familiar connection with them. But if the original sentiment itself did not exist, the circumstances also which quicken its operations and direct its aims, either would have no existence, or would not produce the effects assigned to them. Had we no power to love our fellow-creatures, we should never be united to them by the bonds of friendship—we should not from the mere perception of exact justice feel more pleasure from the prosperity of the good than from that of the bad—we should make little or no distinction between a stranger and a neighbour, or a benefactor and an enemy—and should survey with equal indifference the greatest happiness and the greatest misery of those among whom we live. Upon all the instances of particular benevolence here enumerated, let me observe that they are to be considered as not only evidences of its reality, but as measures also of its strength.

But further, at some period of our life, we all of us evidently take a less or greater interest in the welfare of some one fellow-creature, and in proportion as this interest embraces more objects and pushes us on to more exertions, the principle itself is supposed to be more vigorous. Why then have we such an interest at all? That no real

advantage flows to ourselves we may know from the slightest reflection, yet we are interested *before* and *after* we reflect; and that an interest which we perceive and acknowledge to be imaginary, should make us both feel and act—feel, I mean, continually, and act deliberately, as if it were real—seems to me scarcely intelligible in theory, and is utterly unwarranted by practice. But the difficulty of admitting selfishness as the indirect cause of benevolence increases when we sacrifice a known good, as such, to an imaginary good apprehended as such; nor is this difficulty solved by saying that in cases which confessedly affect ourselves, we often prefer the present and less good to a distant and a greater; for in making this wrong choice we have a distinct view of the object chosen—we suppose it immediately within our grasp—we form dark and confused expectations of not forfeiting the more remote alternative—and at all events we know ourselves, and ourselves alone, to be properly and directly concerned. He that is versed in the artifices of the world, and carries his thoughts over a long line of distant contingencies shall be allowed, if you please, sometimes to give relief from views of vanity or advantage—to act plausibly without feeling tenderly—to fix by a sudden glance his strongest wishes upon the future gratitude of the sufferer, or the future praise of the beholder. But what motive, I would ask, either of pride or interest impels the rude inhabitant of the bleak and barren coast to snatch from destruction the shipwrecked traveller? Amidst the beatings of the storm and the cries of the sufferer has he time to

recollect that a fellow-creature, whom he has never seen before, may hereafter become the companion of his solitude and the friend of his bosom, and may assist him in counteracting the wiles of his enemies, in repelling the attacks of the beast of the forest, or warding off the inclemency of the wintry blast? No. The scene before him rushes upon his notice, and engrosses it entirely; the distress of another makes him insensible even to his own danger—he sympathizes without effort, and he relieves without premeditation. Such are the effects of benevolence, even upon the untutored mind of a barbarian; and when those effects are not produced, whence arises our detestation against the merciless ruffian who imbrues his hand in the blood of a helpless stranger, and seizes for his own use even the scanty and wretched reliques which the fury of the elements had spared? Is it because he neglected his own interests—or because he mistook them? Is it not because he did love himself most perversely and most immoderately—because he did not love another man, by whom he was never beloved—because he did not serve, where he had never been served—because he was quite callous to the social, and quite enslaved to the selfish and unsocial affections?

If we turn our attention towards civilized life, the complex and jarring interests of men will be found to obstruct and to debilitate our kinder feelings, but not to destroy them. Motives, sometimes virtuous and sometimes prudential, may point our benevolence to this or that purpose, and bend it to this or that object in preference to another pur-

pose and another object. But if we weigh together all the effects which an improved state of society has upon our conduct and our hearts, we shall perceive that benevolence had no small share in producing those improvements, and that those improvements in their turn direct benevolence to purposes, upon the whole, more useful, and diffuse it among objects more numerous and more diversified. Even the impressions which are made upon our minds by fictitious representations, bear a strong resemblance to the feelings we have experienced from real events, and are in truth derived from them. The sufferings of afflicted virtue, and the outrages of triumphant wickedness strike us forcibly, even when we are conscious that the instances themselves have never existed; and the praise we give to the talents of a writer is proportionate, not merely to the intenseness of the feelings which he has set in motion, but to the just degree in which he has adapted characters and incidents to our natural sympathies. In the same manner we are affected by the records of history, when we read events which have passed long ago, and in which the most violent effort of our imagination cannot long support us in the belief of any interest which we can call our own. The intellectual taste of man is here regulated by his moral feelings, and those feelings too lead him to rejoice in the good of which he never partook, and to weep over the evil by which he never suffered. The historian and the poet may themselves be often under the influence of malignant passions in their intercourse with mankind;

but for what reason do they appeal only to the benevolent affections of their readers? Surely from experience of the same affections in themselves—from conviction of the force with which they operate when they are not clogged by motives perceived and acknowledged to the selfish—from accurate and repeated observations upon the human mind which, nearly in the same manner, though perhaps in different degrees of intenseness or continuance, is affected by the distant and the near, by the fictitious and the real. Shall we then suffer the abstruse and precarious deductions of perverted ingenuity to prevail over the common language and common apprehensions of the world—over the plain and uncorrupted suggestions of our own bosoms—over the appeal which by the most admired writings, is made professedly and made successfully to our taste—over the commands of religion when addressed to our moral sense—over our perceptions of right—over the consciousness of our obligation to perform it—over the satisfaction we feel when it is actually performed? Shall the precept of Jesus, to love our neighbour, be thought less founded on the powers of social beings than the harsh and paradoxical representations of those deceivers, who would persuade us that we are capable only of loving ourselves? The controversy may soon be decided, if we search our own understandings and our own lives—if we consult, not the wayward and precarious opinions of men who have called in singularity to the aid of sophistry, but the solid and the visible testimony of fact—if we consider that

malignity in the very first moment of fierce and wild gratification is attended with pain nearly equal to the satisfaction, and in the close is assailed by the most exquisite and most unmingled torments; but that benevolence brings with it pleasure in the desire itself, pleasure in the immediate indulgence, pure and increasing pleasure in every repeated effort of reflection.

Many of our principles about right and wrong may be perverted by education and habit; or they may be overborne by corrupt example, by some domineering appetite, or by the crooked and narrow dictates of deliberate self-love. Yet some principle is lodged within the most abandoned minds. It is referred to when we reflect upon action, and forces itself upon us in all our observations upon the conduct and the characters of men. Thus benevolence itself may have a baser alloy in some of its exertions. It may be chilled and polluted by an immoderate regard to ourselves; it may be enfeebled and oppressed by particular sentiments of hatred towards others. Yet it is secretly deposited within our breasts, it takes us by surprise when our own good is not balanced against the good of another. When exercised by others it seizes us by a kind of virtuous contagion, and even where it is too faint to rouse us into action, it consumes its force upon our feelings, which upon the first slight view of their corresponding objects cannot be repelled, and which, upon review, cannot be mistaken.

The moral world, I confess, is stocked with difficulties, and the inconsistencies of man make up no

inconsiderable part of them. But the very idea of inconsistence implies surely some good, some intermixture of good, and the chief wonder of a reflecting mind is that good should not predominate. Now as to benevolence there seems to me no affection about the properties of which we are less open to mistake, for it is called forth, we should remember, in every station from the highest to the lowest, in the social intercourse of every day, in almost every sentiment and every action where the happiness of others can be influenced by our own agency. It often intermingles itself with our sense of justice, since we cannot abstain from wrong forbidden, without a reflex idea that the sum of human happiness would be increased by the voluntary performance of right. It controls the fury of appetite, by holding up to us the baneful effects which indulgence would produce upon the peace and upon the interests of those who are near and dear to us. In a principle, therefore, which recurs thus powerfully and thus often, it were vain to expect delusion, constant and incessant delusion — a delusion so gross as to confound our most distinct and vivid ideas of self, and that which is not self—so extensive, as to pervade all gradations of rank, all varieties of temper, talent, and character, all countries, whether rude or civilized, and, I may add, all generations, past, present, and to come.

Among the numerous hypotheses which have been started, to astonish the mind by their singugularity, and to embarrass it by their intricacy, the pre-eminence, perhaps, is due to that which would

seduce us from the belief of a material world. Yet, however our understanding may be for a time chained up in suspense, the eye, the ear, the hand, soon dissolve the charm, and all the employments of life, all its pleasures and all its duties, go forward with little interruption from the strange and fleeting illusion. But the selfish system, tending as it does to introduce such perplexity and dismay into the intellectual and moral world that is within us, together with such disorder and such disasters into the natural world that is without us, must create in every attentive mind a more serious alarm. Instead of being confined to the obscure and mazy recesses of metaphysics, this system comes forth and meets us in the most beaten paths of active life. The cheerless influence of it descends from the head to the heart. It dries up all the springs of affection and confidence towards our fellow-creatures. It makes us look back with frightful discontent, or with sullen distrust, or with wild amazement, upon ourselves; and because it not only warps our speculations, but cramps our practice, it deserves to be reprobated as well as to be confuted. To the barbarous activity of those who disseminate it, let me then oppose the example of him who has taught us to love our neighbour as ourselves — of him who has shown by the brightest instances the practicability and the efficacy of the precept — of him who has softened the awful grandeur of his own extraordinary and supernatural power, by bringing down the exertions of it to a kind of level with our ordinary conceptions of benevolence — of

him who has spread a moral sort of character over those stupendous facts which were to form the primary and appropriate evidences of his religion — of him who, in order to animate our virtue, as well as to confirm our faith, cleansed the leper, healed the sick, and, in the beautiful language of his inspired follower, "went about doing good."

II. But whatever assurance we may have for the actual existence of benevolence, and with whatever ease we may after action detach it from the adhesion of any other affection, some diversity of opinion may arise when we endeavour to trace out its origin. In the fulness of its meridian glory we may collect the rays into a focus, or as by a prism we may separate them as it were into primordial colours. But when we trace it to the first dawn of our reason, our view becomes less distinct, and we are compelled to be satisfied with the few faint glimmerings, through which the operations of the mind are made known to us before our faculties have emerged from the darkness, in which they are enveloped in a state of mere sensation. I shall therefore, in the second place, endeavour to show in what manner benevolence is formed within us. Now, though in a practical sense I would admit, and shall have occasion hereafter to employ the distinction that has been made between rational and instinctive benevolence, I feel some reluctance in allowing the affection to be an instinct either in the popular or the philosophical meaning of the word; and I think that it may be clearly and satisfactorily explained, if we resolve it into association.

I use this term, though I am aware that philosophers employ the word combination to express the generic idea of which composition and association are the two species. Composition, they say, takes place when we form one single complex idea, the parts of which always recur and are made known to us by one name. But association happens when they always appear indeed together, but are not blended in one mass—do not draw on each other by any visible relation, and are not distinguished by any one definite and appropriate word; but the operations of our minds in both cases bear a near affinity one to another. It is not always easy to determine to which class some of our ideas are to be referred; and as all our associations are progressive, are capable of increase, and subject to variations more or less accidental, I would be understood to extend the word to that state of mind, in which the coalescence of our ideas assumes something of a general nature, and is marked, like joy or sorrow, love or hatred, by a general and fixed appellation. We are born not only without virtue, and without vice, but even without those passions which, as they are more or less indulged, or well or ill directed, become the source of both. Those passions themselves are preceded by states of pleasure and pain, which generate love or hatred towards their respective causes. They are in truth collections of simple ideas joined together by association, and are excited by the external objects of nature, and by the various incidents of human life. Even in infancy, when a number of ideas crowd upon the mind, we

have a faculty of turning our notice to those which strike us more strongly, and of selecting them from the rest of their concomitants. The agreeableness of these ideas makes the notice itself more frequently repeated, and as the organs of our mind fall, as it were, more easily into the modifications to which they have been used, frequency of appearance will produce an effect similar to vigour of impression. The constant connection of two or more ideas, in time and place, will cause them to coalesce more firmly; and as our experience with outward objects, and our intercourse with other men, discover to us more qualities in the *idiata* themselves, our ideas of reflection are not only coupled with each other, but with those which were originally derived from sensation; and when this combination is once formed, it may indeed be a little strengthened or a little weakened by accidental causes, but it will remain in the mind without any voluntary effort of our own to preserve it. Thus we work out not only our abstract ideas, but our very passions by our own activity, not indeed with a direct purpose so to do, but because our minds are irresistibly impelled to fix upon striking objects, and because our affections in a course of time prompt us to look forward to the future, enlarge our enjoyments beyond the sphere of sensation and appetite, and invite us to perpetual employment by suggesting objects about which we may be employed. Thus reflection supplies the office of that mechanical faculty by which our attention was first drawn to that which affected us most powerfully, and leads back

our thoughts to the source from which satisfaction was first perceived, either when we avoided evil, or when we pursued good—when we did so from a feeling of love or hatred—when love and hatred themselves arose from pleasure or from pain. And here I would observe, that the effects of intenseness in those feelings are not to be overlooked; for whether they be pleasing or painful, the degree in which they act makes a strong impression upon our memory, connects the return of the object with the remembrance of the feeling, and having affixed to that object a sentiment of love or hatred, impels us to seek or to shun it.

In aid of our own immediate and proper experience, the propensity we have to imitation—the deference we pay to instruction, which are themselves the result of antecedent experience—the habit of pursuing what we desire, and of flying from what we hate, all conspire to carry us on to those objects which at first pleased, when we had no settled purpose of being pleased; and when the secondary passion is grafted upon the primary, their operations are so very complex, that we cannot always distinguish the one from the other.

In this manner, then, our general desires, and our general endeavours, are formed out of those which were particular; and when formed, they in their turn lead on a train of other particular desires, different from those which were primarily felt, but they all of them originate in sensation itself—in the sensation, as I have before said, of pleasure or of pain, and in the feeling of love or hatred which necessarily follow

them. They also become, and in this manner too they become more and more complex; they are interwoven with each other more closely, and excite each other more powerfully, as the stock of our ideas is enlarged by experience and observation.

We are told by a great writer, that as sensation will generate imagination, so these two will generate ambition. Ambition joined with the rest produces self-interest, and self-interest co-operating with the causes by which it was itself produced, will give birth to sympathy, and all those again may revert upon each other in an inverted order. This general account of the manner in which an affection is formed, may be further illustrated by tracing, in a succession of instances, the progress of benevolence. An infant feels animal wants, which are supplied by the assistance of others; that assistance is attended by an agreeable sensation, which being repeated, is directed to the person who furnished it, and produces a second sentiment of love. At first perhaps the love is equally turned to things supplied, and to the person who supplied it; but after frequent recurrence we separate the ideas, and consider the person as the instrumental cause by which the thing is obtained. As we advance in life other wants are supplied, other desires are gratified, by the kindness of other persons; and the pleasure arising from the gratification is here too double, partly derived from the external object, and partly from the living agent. When the sentiment of love is thus generated, we quickly perceive that by exercising it we pursue a greater variety, and a greater

abundance of gratifications to ourselves, in proportion as we put forth our own powers to procure them for others; and those powers are put forth voluntarily, after we have experienced the favourable effects, which they had produced when they had been exerted either in involuntary action, or in mechanical imitation. Hence we find a new train of satisfaction in the mere presence of those whom we love, and by whom we are beloved—whom we benefit, and by whom we are benefited. The tenderness of our parents, the cheerfulness of our friends, the activity even of our servants, invigorate our sympathies. Their joys and their sorrows become known to us by the signs which mark our own, and point out the occasions upon which we ourselves must be sorrowful or joyful. We smile upon seeing their smiles, and are dejected by seeing their dejection; every instance in which we have shown our sympathy produces approbation from those with whom we sympathize, and this approbation becomes a new source of pleasure to ourselves, and of love, which issues from that pleasure, towards the person by whom we are approved. We find the highest praises bestowed upon the principle of kindness after we know the meaning of the term, and have learnt to apply it, or to understand it when applied, to the actions and feelings which it denotes. We have personal experience of those advantages when we are ourselves kind, and we see them diffused among others who act and feel kindly. Thus the sensibilities which were at first confined to ourselves are gradually transferred to others, and the

habit of doing good to others, though formed at first by a sense of good done to ourselves, terminates at last in the objects that are without us.

When the principle of good-will is thus far generated, numberless circumstances call it into action; from relations and friends, it passes on to neighbours, to strangers, and in its last stage of perfection even to enemies. The feeling in every case tends to produce a correspondent action; the action in its turn enlivens the feeling, and reflection facilitates both. We serve those whom we love, because our services increase the pleasures of that love; we serve those whom we hate, because every service instantly softens the pains of hatred, and being associated with a conscientious sense of the duty of forgiveness—with a compassionate sense of misery in the object—with a sense of justice to his merits, towards which we fondly turn our attention, it gradually converts those pains into an opposite feeling of pleasure. We serve both friend and foe without any direct regard to our own interest, and then our action is ascribed to good nature; we serve them in known opposition to those interests, and then our kindness assumes the nobler name of generosity.

Now, as compassion has a mixture both of pain and pleasure, it may be worth while to trace in the same manner this species of sympathy. Before our imagination is corrected by our reason, it uniformly and indiscriminately unites the adjuncts of pain with the sufferings of it; and the knowledge of those adjuncts is obtained by transferring to others the idea of the same appearance which pain exhibits in our-

selves. Now every outward mark of the misery which we have ourselves internally experienced, excites the remembrance of that misery, and reimpresses the painful feeling. As we acquire the knowledge of words, and find them associated with our own feelings, the mere description of distress is followed by an uneasy emotion; and when experience, concurring with observation, applies the same words to others, our own application being accompanied by the remembrance of our own sufferings, recalls the same emotion. The bodily and mental pains of those among whom we live extend to ourselves, and excite in us an effort to remove them for our own sakes. The calamities and sorrows of those by whom our own calamities and sorrows are mitigated, raise in us the idea of pain and misery. We hear that we ought to make an effort for removing them similar to that by which we had removed our own: we find upon experiment that we can remove them. The general sentiment of affection which before existed, induces us to make the attempt: the success of that attempt, by removing the cause of uneasiness, is attended with a pleasing sensation, which impels us to further and stronger efforts: and as the affection gathers strength, it is extended to more and more objects, and for the sake of the pleasure accompanying it, it acts upon a new set of objects from which we have no remembrance of having received any succour. This affection too is animated by applause, and by reciprocation of kindness: it is supported by the accession of new motives from the consciousness of rectitude, and while the original feeling of our own interest be-

comes less and less vivid from various causes; from reflection especially, and from the mere habit of paying some regard to the interests of others, our compassion becomes more and more purified, and is acted upon at the first sight of distress in which we ourselves have no real or imaginary concern.

Thus, benevolence may be traced up to sensation, and thus in our own joys and sorrows, in our own hopes and fears, we find the first springs of those motives which carry us out of ourselves, and which ultimately fix upon the joys and sorrows, the hopes and the fears of our fellow creatures. Such is the constitution of our nature, and if all the happy and amiable effects of benevolence are secured by that constitution, we have no reason to be alarmed, no right to be offended at the remoteness, and the multiplicity, and the intricacy of the causes from which they flow.

In this speculative view of the matter, all the moral ends of our being are amply provided for. The primary feelings which immediately and solely affect ourselves, operate at a time when from corporeal and mental debility we are incapable of promoting the happiness of others; but they gradually intermingle, and finally coalesce, with other feelings and other ideas, which in our intercourse with mankind are introduced, and which prepare us for action, when we are capable of acting, from the best motives, and with the most beneficial consequences. Benevolence therefore is not degraded, because it is formed in the same manner with all our other virtuous affections. Those affections are not degraded be-

cause they proceed from the same fountain with our highest intellectual faculties. Sensation, and sensation alone, is the common origin of all our ideas, of all our emotions, of all our improvements in science as well as morality. But the gracious Author of our being has so adapted the various powers of our mind to each other—He brings them forward in such just gradations—He has made them capable of such mutual actions, and such progressive improvement—He has assigned them such provinces for their distinct or their united operation, that from small and scarcely perceptible beginnings, arises a sum of knowledge, of virtue, and of happiness sufficient to fill up the most extended span of our present life, and sufficient also to prepare us for the exercise of nobler powers in all the future and higher stages of being for which we are destined.

III. Let us now consider both the manner and the degree, in which benevolence operates both as an affection and a duty. We have seen under the preceding head, from what materials and in what progression the principle is formed—how it recedes more and more from sensation in which it originated—how it is purified more and more from that regard to our own good which first carried out our love to those who promoted it—and how it tends to bring our minds finally into such a state, that our feelings and their correspondent actions are influenced only by the good and evil of others—good which we can promote, and evil which we can alleviate. But though pleasure felt by ourselves in good conferred, or in evil averted, had so large a share in generating the affec-

tion itself; yet when it proceeds to act towards others, their pains rather than their pleasures affect us. The sentiment indeed by which we rejoice with those who rejoice, is upon the whole less powerful and less extensive than that by which we weep with those who weep. Compassion extracts some sweets even from the bitterness of its own sorrow, and fondly hangs over its object, regardless of pain, or cherishing it even as a source of peculiar satisfaction. This difference in the modification of benevolence is admirably suited to the condition of mankind, and forms a new proof of the harmony which subsists between the natural and the moral world. It is oftener in our power to do positive evil than positive good, but compassion restrains us from doing it. It is oftener in our power to relieve men in their adversity, than to assist them in their prosperity, aud therefore the feeling which impels to the one is stronger than the feeling which impels to the other. It is oftener in our inclination to pursue unmixed than mixed pleasures, and therefore the pain which accompanies compassion makes the feeling more intense, and is itself ultimately convertible into pleasure. Even in the relation which our better affections bear to our worse, the advantage is in favour of compassion, for envy more frequently prevents us from rejoicing with the prosperous, than resentment prevents us from sorrowing with the unfortunate; and here again the internal constitution of man is accomodated to his outward condition—for the prosperous have little to fear, and may triumph over envy; but the unfortunate have

much to hope, and cannot struggle against resentment.

The language of mankind is considerably influenced by the force and the frequency with which any idea recurs and accordingly it has been remarked (by Butler), that while the name of compassion is assigned to the feeling with which we weep with those who weep; the opposite feeling of rejoicing with those who rejoice is not marked by any proper appellation, and even the action which is a sign of the feeling, and is called congratulation, signifies chiefly an outward form of civility, and denotes a real, indeed, but a very faint perception of any inward sentiment. The same observation may be extended in part, to a language which is eminently replete with terms of discrimination. It supplies, indeed verbs (συναλγεῖν and συγχαίρειν) to express a state of action for both, but is destitute of substantives to express the action performed, and in this respect compassion, as denoting sympathy with others, and as transferred from the generic idea to one great species, gives the English term a very eminent superiority. It may be worth while to add, that in words which denote the agents themselves, the Greek language assigns no term of approbation to the man who rejoices in the good of another, but has affixed a very significant term of reproach to him who rejoices in the evil—επιχαιρέκακος.

From the general sentiment of good will to mankind, we are conscious both of the sentiment which partakes of their joys and of that which partakes of their sorrows; but the object of the one is felicity

gained, which neither requires nor perhaps admits any increase within our power; while the object of the other is misery suffered, which does not only admit but require alleviation. The sentiment, however, in both cases, though it should not be followed up by action, is productive of beneficial consequences, for we enjoy good fortune more exquisitely, and we suffer under bad fortune less keenly, when other men seem to enter into our enjoyments and our sufferings. There is no waste therefore of benevolence in either case, and in both cases provision is made for it. Hence we rejoice in events which we have no share in producing, and we weep at events which we have no power to mitigate; but the feeling in both becomes more intense in contrary situations, where it actually is in our power to produce the good or mitigate the evil.

With the same wise adaptation of our affections to our agency, the sentiments are themselves limited; for life would indeed be embittered if every report of woe excited the anguish of compassion, and the happiness of it would not be much increased if the prosperity of men far removed from us were the cause of vehement exultation. The great Author of our nature has endowed our affection with sufficient force to influence our action. But he has guarded against any waste of the principle which directs us to act; for if that principle extended in an equal degree to all mankind, it would not only be fruitless, but even hurtful to ourselves and others—hurtful to ourselves, because unavailing attempts to gratify our benevolence would subject us to greater

pain than pleasure, and perhaps drive us back to the selfish affections which we can always indulge—hurtful to others, because it would transfer to a stranger those services, which are more immediately claimed where they can be more beneficially bestowed by a relation, by a friend, by an inhabitant of the same neighbourhood, or a member of the same community. When, therefore, we speak of universal benevolence, we for the most part use only a negative term; we mean, that from the principle of good-will no man is particularly and positively excluded, and that our good wishes are stretched beyond the circle of our good actions, and embrace the unknown as well as the known interests of our species. Those wishes, however, are not altogether useless because they dispose and prepare us for action when the opportunity to act comes before us; and though their objects be only ideal, the habit of contemplating them strengthens the principle, which stimulates us to action when real objects are presented to us.

But from these limitations which I have assigned to the affection, let no man suppose that I intend to narrow and to debase it. There is always danger in representing the very best parts of our nature beyond reality. But there is sufficient encouragement to virtue if we show the extent to which it really can be practised. That virtue is itself obligatory only so far as it is practicable, and it too is practicable only so far as it would be useful to ourselves and our species. Now our benevolence, as we have before seen, goes forward from our attend-

ance and our parents to our companions, to our friends, to our benefactors, to our inferiors, to our equals, and even to our superiors, all of whom may be severally the objects of its activity; and surely it is more safe and more just to describe it as extending gradually to this great variety of cases, than to assign such properties and such powers to it as have no foundation in fact—such as would give every system of morality and religion the air of a romance—very amusing, indeed, to our fancy, but very delusive to our understandings.

In every station of life benevolence will reach the extent which I have just now mentioned. But it extends yet further; for when the affection is formed up to this point by growing experience, we have a faculty of bringing together individuals into a larger compound, where benevolence, though bestowed upon a mere abstract object, is real and entire—where it expands in full proportion to the magnitude of that object, and pants for opportunities of embracing it in deed as well as in thought. Hence are derived the warm and generous love which we bear to our country—the resignation of personal interest and personal safety—the contempt of difficulty and danger, and death—and all the high and arduous achievements, by which the spirit of true patriotism displays its noblest and most distinguishing energies. Even the collective species of man, when viewed as such by our imagination, become the objects of our love; and in the moment of viewing them, we feel delight or sorrow in the aggregate of good or evil which we perceive to be dif-

fused among them. These large contemplations, too, confirm and animate the affection, though the province of its action is determined by such exigencies as arise in our various stations. But useful as it may be to cherish every virtuous principle by extending its ideal sphere to the utmost point which even our thoughts can reach, we are so formed, and *happily* so formed, that realities act upon our affections more directly, and more powerfully. Hence the greatest good which, in any supposed case, it might be possible for us to render to the whole race of mankind, has much less influence upon our benevolence than the confined good, which we perceive it in our power to confer upon those who are nearer and dearer to us. In the former case our imaginations are enlarged and transported amidst a group of indistinct and crowded ideas. But in the latter our affections are put in motion, and the will follows the affection, and action follows the will. Thus it appears that our affections bear a just proportion to our duty, and our duty must always depend upon the extent of our power. Upon this principle we are commanded in the text to love our neighbour—a command which adapts itself to the circumscribed agency of the bulk of men, and which is so explained by its gracious Author in the parable of the Samaritan, as to comprehend every case in which distress is known to us, and being known can be relieved by us.

But it may be asked, if the affection itself be so strong, where is the necessity of a command to exercise it? That necessity, I answer, arises from the

frailty of man—from the various obstructions which self-love, or which our lower appetites throw in its way; and surely he that considers the imperfect degree in which benevolence operates among the greater part of mankind, will not hastily decide against the expediency of any additional and extrinsic incitement. The Gospel, therefore, being intended for the guidance of man, is adapted to man's real condition—to his weakness as well as to his strength—to the control of his selfish, and through that control to the improvement of his social regards. Hence the sacred writers inculcate benevolence in a manner peculiar, and, I will add, new, for they represent as a sin the want of many social qualities, a disregard to which, according to our estimate of characters, would be called only a defect. They point the displeasure of heaven against cases where reason provides no other discouragement than the mere absence of esteem amongst our fellow-creatures. They bind upon us as an indispensable duty, what we are accustomed to admire as a kind of rare and arbitrary virtue, which cannot, indeed, be performed without approbation, but which may be neglected without danger. They interest self-love itself upon the side of benevolence, by teaching us to renounce a present for a future good. They direct our fears as well as our hopes to the same end; because the good, if conferred, will entitle us to reward, and if refused, will subject us to punishment.

Much as I detest the selfish system which represents men as worse than they are, I would guard

against the effects of a contrary system, which describes them as better than they can be; for the tendency of both is in the event injurious to our virtue, as the one would prove the inefficacy of all encouragements to be benevolent, and the other would diminish the stock of benevolence by removing one very efficacious motive. Such in truth is the actual state of man, that no perception of the propriety and general utility of actions—no force of affection by which we are carried on to particular efforts, are sufficient securities for our virtue. The general utility does not come home to ourselves, and therefore is insufficient to counterbalance the sense of private interest. The force of affection is counteracted by the suggestions of self-love, which we are always prone to indulge, when the less good of our own is to be sacrificed to the greater good of another. But when such a sacrifice is known to be subservient to our final happiness, even the benevolent affections are strengthened by the accession of a command from above. They derive, too, not only new merit, but new dignity from the addition of duty; for surely the reference of every action to the divine will—the desire of obtaining the divine approbation—the preference which in consequence of that desire we give to distant over immediate advantage, fall within our most exalted ideas of rectitude. They correspond with our notions of man, who is not only a social but a reasonable being, and who owes love to his God as well as to his neighbour. They inspire us with a sense of reverence and of gratitude to religion, which has

made the love of man the criterion of our love to God, and has bound together the temporal interests of others with our own eternal interests. They raise a sentiment of administration and respect towards the virtuous agent who obeys his God, not less powerful surely than the sentiment of affection which we feel for the same agent, when he is visibly actuated only by the mere love of man. In a word, if man be a responsible as well as a social being, and if his future happiness is connected with his present activity of promoting the happiness of others, religion would be defective if it did not include so important a part of our agency—if it did not impose as a duty what we might be languid in pursuing as a mere excellence—if it did not regulate and sanctify the exercise of those feelings, the principles of which were implanted by nature when it gave us capacity and aptitude for loving one another.

The propriety of the general precept will be seen more clearly, if we consider the instances in which it is particularly inculcated; for there we shall find that where the affection is more feeble, and stands in need of encouragement, the precept which encourages it is more explicit and more peremptory. The harmony of opinions and interests gives a vigour to our friendship, and therefore we are not commanded to love our friends; but we are commanded to love our enemies because the social affection is in more danger of being overpowered by the unsocial. The activity of parental love is a sufficient security for the protection of children, and therefore religion

guards against the excess of it by directing us to restrain and punish those faults which blind and immoderate partiality might overlook and indulge. But filial affection is far less powerful, and therefore the defects of it are supplied by a command which holds the first rank in the class of our social duties. Here then I have endeavoured to show, not only the necessity of a general direction to love our neighbour, but the propriety of the particular rules by which that love is directed.

If it should be objected that the precept to love our neighbour is too general, we may answer, that our reason can never fail in the application of the rule, if we consult its dictates honestly and seriously. In all abstract inquiries about virtue, the sentiment of approbation is feeble and indistinct, while we are considering the subject only in a general point of view. But when any particular instance is adduced we immediately feel an agreement between our own sentiments and those of the virtuous agent. Thus in respect to duties, they are for the most part prescribed generally; and it is only by adducing particular instances, that we can determine when they are properly and completely performed. Now benevolence as an universal duty is no farther obligatory than as it is negative, and abstains from doing evil where the sanctions of human laws have, and where they have not, established any prohibition. Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet, are duties which the Apostle represents as parts of the love which worketh no ill to its neighbour, and which is

the fulfilling of the law. Thus *love*, or as the word is translated, charity, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. But as a positive duty benevolence depends upon circumstances, and those circumstances may be such as to sometimes make our omission not very criminal, and sometimes to require that the relation of the objects themselves should determine the measure of our actions. Thus a greater good which we can bestow upon a child, or upon a friend, must not always be forborne, though by forbearing it, we might do a greater good to a stranger; and again, if the good to be done to a stranger be necessary to his preservation, it must be performed; and the good which involves only the convenience of a child and friend must be relinquished. The rules of justice are indeed precise and determinate—of justice, I mean as distinguished from benevolence; for in a more enlarged sense of the word, benevolence is a part of justice; and when connected, as I do connect it, with duty, we serve our fellow-creatures, who as such have a right to be served—we owe them those services—and by performing them we only pay them what is their due. But in settling when, to what extent the right may be urged, and being urged must be admitted, much is left to our own judgment and our own choice. The obligation not to do evil is in all cases equally binding, because it is equally practicable; the obligation to do good is less binding, because the power to do it must, in different situations be less; the one aims at the prevention of evil, which

if not prevented must end in our destruction. The other at the production of good, which, though obtained in a less degree, may render our existence upon the whole comfortable and happy. In justice, we strongly condemn the violation, and faintly approve the observance of a rule. In benevolence, we can sometimes pardon the omission, where we should highly applaud the performance; and indeed it is this very circumstance of imperfect obligation, which stamps that performance itself in its highest and most appropriate merit.

Doubtless there are some cases in which the obligation to benevolence seems equally strong with the obligation to justice, and in which the neglect of it excites even a stronger abhorrence. He that would deny a morsel of bread to the faint and wearied traveller—he that turns away his eyes from his own flesh when pining with hunger or agonizing in sickness—he that refuses the sacrifice of a petty interest or a frivolous amusement, to snatch the friend of his youth from impending ruin, is viewed with no less detestation than the most unprincipled ruffian. Such omissions mark not merely the langour, but the extinction of the affection, and the hatred we feel towards them, is a decisive proof that with the affection itself our minds have united the sense of immediate and indispensible duty. I put this strong case because we are liable to some mistakes in our reasoning upon the mixture of the duty with the affection. Thus we are susceptible of less gratitude and less approbation when a service is done to us, merely because he who did it thought him-

self obliged to do it. But then we condemn him not for what he did, but for what he did not; not for acting from the duty, but for not acting from the affection. Also for a good action performed, we think a similar action should be returned; and when returned it comes under one notion of justice, or of proportion between good done and good received. But we do not love the agent, unless we uppose ourselves beloved by him; and here again the absence of love falls under another notion of proportion between the love which first induced us to do the good, and the love which ought to have induced another to return it.

These instances certainly prove that even our reasoning, as well as our sympathetic faculties, would approve the action more, if affection intermingled itself with a sense of duty; and since we experimentally know that men are more often and more powerfully impelled by affections than by a sense of duty, we should prefer what is only done by the strength of affection, to that which is only done by a strength of duty. But we must not hastily conclude, either that they are incompatible, or that their united force is not superior in the agent to their separate, or that the approbation of the object would not be stronger when they acted conjointly than when they acted exclusively of each other. On the contrary, if we could suppose men to be so habitually and steadily under the influence of a sense of duty that they would in every possible case do what is right to every possible extent, they would appear more perfect, and they would be the objects of higher approbation and more unbounded

confidence than when they act under the separate influence of their affection, or the combined influence of their affections and their judgments. The cause of this preference is, that reason, considered as such, is a surer and a better guide than affection, and that affection as such, in a moral being, is supplemental to his reason. But in the present state of man, where reason would not be so sure a guide, our virtue depends upon the aid of both, and both are sufficient, if we uniformly acted up to their dictates, to make the love of our neighbour co-extensive with all the possible interests of mankind and all the possible means which we have of promoting them.

I insist the more largely upon these considerations, lest any partial and erroneous conclusions upon the subject of duty should lessen in your minds the propriety and weaken the efficacy of the command which is laid down in the text. Our Lord speaks in it to the affections through the understanding, and he has extended the command to the utmost degree of affection which our nature can attain. Can benevolence be carried to a higher degree than when we are directed to love our neighbour as ourselves? Can it be more strongly represented as a habit of thought and action than when we are required only to do justice and to love mercy? Can it be invested with more importance, or exalted to more dignity, than when the love of frail and sinful man is pronounced like unto that love which we are to bear to an all-wise, all-powerful, and all-perfect God? The only question at first sight would be, whether the duty enjoined does not go beyond the affection implanted in us, and whether it

be possible for us in any case to love our neighbour as ourselves. The imperfections then of human virtue may show us the necessity for some command to be given; and on the propriety of that which is given we shall more readily acquiesce, if we suppose it to have been expressed in any other terms. Let us suppose—love your neighbour as a foe; but this surely leaves the principle of benevolence glaringly imperfect. Love him as a friend, or as a child; but this is generally impossible from the very frame of our nature, and it might sometimes be insufficient, as situations may arise where the interests of a friend or a child must give way to those of a stranger; and where, in reference to those situations our compassion may for the moment induce us to love him more. Love him as a countryman; but such a principle of love does not include all the soft and tender endearments which individuals perform to individuals in private life, and which constitute by far the greatest part of our benevolent dispositions and benevolent exertions. But when we are directed to love our neighbour, we easily understand that the term implies every man whose prosperity we can forward, or whose miseries we can lighten.

Here, then, we see the propriety of being commanded to love our neighbour; and when the command is so far extended as to require that we should love him as ourselves, we shall still find that religion, when properly understood, coincides with nature. I know not that we are bound to understand by the terms a strict equality of love, but rather, I

should suppose, that a similarity is meant by our blessed Lord—we are not so to love ourselves as to have no love for others—we are so to love others as the love of our ourselves would make us wish that we should be beloved. The love both of ourselves and of others are trusts, but the opportunities for discharging them are very different. However extensive and however active may be the affection we bear to mankind, our own wants, our own desires, and our own preservation would have a more constant influence upon us even if we supposed the injunction to mean that we should love our neighbour equally with ourselves. But the precept, after all, rather determines the kind than the degree of our love; and because the love which we bear to ourselves occurs to us so often, and recurs so frequently, we cannot but lay a very great stress upon that affection, which is represented as like to it. The transition of our minds from ourselves to others leads us to the consideration of that common interest, which is most effectually promoted by sacrificing part of our own happiness to the happiness of others. It crushes those evasions by which we are so often disposed to explain away any general rule, and justify ourselves for the neglect of duty when the good of others is balanced against our own. It holds up our neighbour in so strong and so near a point of view, that we must sometimes turn from the contemplation of our own interests to the sight of his distresses. Being the command of God it teaches us to consult not only our feelings but our conscience, that great and solemn arbiter, which

the Deity has placed within our breasts, and the decisions of which are always unfavourable to us when, from any undue love to ourselves, we have been defective in the love of our neighbour. The sentiments of mankind, which do not always condemn us for particular omissions of benevolence, yet mark us out for scorn and contempt, where those omissions are frequent and glaring, and where selfishness becomes the predominant and loathsome feature of our characters. But the commands of God extend to our particular as well as to our general conduct; and in every instance where we have hardened our hearts and closed our hands amidst the sufferings and the supplications of our fellow-creatures conscience, recognizing those commands, strikes us down with a sense of our own baseness, puts to flight every mean and treacherous subterfuge, and fills us with the most alarming apprehensions of future and just condemnation. The office of conscience in regulating our benevolence will be more fully considered under the next head; but the idea of duty impressed by the words of the text required some mention of it upon the present occasion, and is a proof that according to the discharge or neglect of that duty our behaviour will be approved or disapproved by that inward, that awful, that most infallible sentence from which there is no appeal.

Let me not be misunderstood; for while I consider the importance of taking into the account a sense of duty, I would be understood to recommend that sense not as the sole, but as the supreme princi-

ple of our conduct. Much of the merit, I am well aware, and much of the efficacy too of our affections, lie in themselves; for we are, and we ought to be, grateful from gratitude as such—kind from compassion—charitable from generosity. There is a fitness or right in each of these motives; and there is also a distinct and a superior fitness in the motive of obeying God. Man, as a fellow-creature, is the proper object of the affection; and God, as our Judge, is a no less proper object of the duty. But when we have acted from the affection alone, let it be remembered that a sense of right—a sense of duty—instantaneously succeeds, and both justifies and consecrates the action in the estimation of the agent. Without such a sense, we should consider the affection itself as a blind and irresistible principle. We should impute no right intention to the agent—we should impute no merit to the action—we might feel love, as we do feel it, from the kindness of brutes towards each other; but we should not feel that kind of approbation which accompanies all our sentiments and all our affections upon the conduct of man as a reasonable being.

But further. Though I contend for the efficacy of the affection, and the duty in stimulating us to particular acts of benevolence, I am very sensible this virtue gradually tends to such a state of perfection as not to require immediate aid from either. In its first stages the aid of both is requisite, and in its last we have occasion for the aid of neither; for habit has then gained the power, which before was lodged in the affection and in the command.

This I will explain more particularly. The fitness of obeying the precepts of religion, and the rewards which await our obedience, assist us, as I said, in the progress of our virtue; and perhaps there is no stage of our being, in which the general principle of that virtue is not invigorated by general reflection upon that fitness and those rewards. But the surest test of our proficiency is when in going forward to particular acts, we neither have such reflections nor stand in need of them. When the action which was at first voluntary becomes, as it were, mechanical—when without any sense of immediate duty, or any expectation of distant recompence, we fulfil the one and deserve the other. So again in regard to our affections, an instantaneous and lively feeling is necessary at first to make them efficacious. The advantages, too, derived from benevolence—the pleasure it gives when recollected by ourselves—the esteem it procures for us when observed by others, quicken the affection. But in our progress towards perfection all these considerations become gradually less and less vivid; and at last they coalesce into one assemblage of ideas, by the influence of which, without any direct and explicit perception of duty—any violent excitement of the affection itself, we are led to be benevolent, and to act benevolently upon the first opportunity for action—upon the first short impulse to act. The effect remains, though the causes from which it proceeds lies remote from our view; or rather because, from the assimilation of those causes to each other, their influence at last becomes instantaneous, steady, uniform, and simple.

The power of habit in giving ease and frequency to those actions, which at first required effort and foundation, will suggest to you the justness of those properties which I have here assigned to benevolence in its last and best state. We have seen it advance from sensation to the understanding—from a sense of our own pleasures and pains to the pleasures and pains of other men—from a particular to a general affection—from an affection to a principle of duty—and from a principle of duty, happy shall we be, if in our own own minds and our own lives it reaches the high summit of habit, where all that is difficult becomes easy—all that is complex is simple—all that was mixed with the love of ourselves is purified into the love of our neighbour alone.

To these reasonings upon the affection of benevolence as conjoined with the duty of being benevolent, I will add a few plain but not unimportant remarks. In the love of our neighbour, it is commonly said, that we substitute him for ourselves: but this mistake, which arises from our manner of considering the duty, deserves to be rectified when we are considering the affection.

In fixing the measure of the duty, we are to do unto others as we would they should do unto us; and here we certainly put our neighbour in the place of ourselves. But under the influence of the affection, our thoughts move in a different order; for though, by reflection, I may bring the case of another man home to myself, and may anticipate what I should myself feel in a similar situation, sympathy acts in a more quick and direct manner. I will give

my meaning in the words of a great writer, who has most sagaciously observed and most happily explained the phenomenon. "But though sympathy is very properly said to arise from an imaginary change of situations with the person principally concerned, yet this imaginary change is not supposed to happen to me in my own person and character, but in that of the person with whom I sympathise. When I condole with you for the loss of your only son, in order to enter into your grief, I do not consider what I, a person of such a character and profession should suffer if I had a son, and if that son was unfortunately to die; but I consider what I should suffer if I was really you, and I not only change circumstances with you, but I change persons and characters. My grief, therefore, is entirely upon your account, and not in the least upon my own. It is not, therefore, in the least selfish. How can that be regarded as a selfish passion which does not arise even from the imagination of any thing that has befallen or that relates to myself, in my own proper person and character, but which is entirely occupied about what relates to you. The affection, as appears then from this representation, makes me feel as if I myself was suffering in the person of my neighbour. But the duty, as I before said, requires me to act as if I was suffering in my own person. In the first case I love and feel for my neighbour as my neighbour's self-love makes him feel for himself. In the second case I am to do for my neighbour what my own self-love would make me desire that he should do for myself in similar

circumstances. The change in both cases is imaginary, but in both produces a real effect, and as to the difference in the two changes, it is wisely adapted to the purposes of active benevolence. When I feel in imagination the change of myself into another, my sympathy is a very uncertain measure of his sufferings. But, when I act in consequence of substituting another man for myself, I can distinctly know what is due to another, because I feel what would be due to myself. The affection acts quickly and co-operates only with our imagination. But in settling the duty, reason is at hand to correct any inequality in the sympathy. But should it be said that the sufferings are the measure of the duty, and that because the sufferings are by supposition imperfectly understood by sympathy, the duty itself therefore will be imperfectly discharged in action, the answer is, that self-love when it appreciates its claims seldom falls short of what they ought to include for ourselves, and therefore will certainly not dictate less than ought to be done for another. We cannot feel for others as they feel for themselves, but we can do for others all that should be done for ourselves. If the affection therefore be too weak when we stand in the place of others, the sense of duty, aided by self-love, will supply the defect when we make others to stand for ourselves, and thus convert the excess of self-love into an occasion of virtue."

Hitherto I have contended only for the reality of the principle of benevolence; but in some reasonings which follow I have examined both the limitations to which the Deity has wisely subjected the affection

itself, and the degree to which he has graciously extended the sphere of its operation, as it gradually becomes more invigorated and more purified by perpetual exercise, and being connected with a sense of duty, ultimately acts up to the express injunction of our Lord, and induces us to love our neighbour even as ourselves. In the course of that examination it appears that every person is morally our neighbour, whose interest comes within the reach of our own physical agency; and from this consideration I am naturally led to offer some remarks upon the very useful purposes of charity which are promoted by your schools. Having twice submitted to the public my sentiments upon the general utility of such institutions, I shall not at present enter into an elaborate defence of the right which every poor child may plead to the advantages of education—a right which, in point of necessity, is nearly as binding upon us, as that by which the law has pronounced him entitled to clothing when he is naked, or to food when he is hungry—a right which increases with the increasing improvement of his contemporaries in civilization and knowledge, because upon comparison of his own condition with that of his superiors, he, if neglected, would be plunged into a worse state than if he had been born in an age of ignorance and barbarism—he would have the keener mortification of standing uninstructed and unprotected among multitudes whose power to instruct and protect him is confessedly greater — he would be thrown to a wider and more degrading distance from those who share with him one common nature,

who act with him for the benefit of one common society, and who are called with him to one common hope in Jesus Christ. Every corrupt tree, you are told, bringeth forth corrupt fruit; and hence it has happened, that the advocates of the selfish system have employed their abilities with unusual ardour in thrusting out the poor from the blessings of education—in discouraging you from the love of your neighbour—and in bereaving your neighbour himself of those aids by which he is to be trained up to the love of God. Thus all the salutary effects of the first great commandment, and of the second, which is like unto it, are equally blasted under the malignant influence both of their speculative and their practical tenets. But your judgments, I am sure, are too enlightened, and your feelings are too humane, to admit for a moment the delusive and pernicious arguments of those writers, who represent the smallest pittance of information as unnecessary to the welfare, and even destructive to the tranquillity, of the lower orders of the community. You are well persuaded that some improvement of reason must upon the whole be conducive to the well-being of reasonable creatures; and if you would indulge your inquisitiveness, or exercise your ingenuity, in calculating the mischiefs which arise from the abuse of knowledge, you will look for them in other quarters, where the instances of such abuse are most numerous, most prominent, most seductive to opinion, and most fatal to morals.

The kind and the degree of knowledge which may be requisite for the poor, cannot perhaps be

exactly ascertained in general speculation; and yet I am confident that, from the kinds and the degrees in which it is actually communicated in these schools, the general benefits far counterbalance all the occasional inconveniences which have been so loudly and scornfully imputed to them. But in answer to all vague surmises and arbitrary assumptions, it is sufficient to know that, whensoever you are called upon to execute a plan of education, plain good sense, directed by upright intentions, will either prevent any dangerous mistake, or enable you to discover it soon, and to remove it effectually. In this assertion I am justified by my observations upon the measures pursued in other seminaries of this kind, and by my perusal of the rules which you have drawn up for the government of your own; and happy I am in this opportunity of bearing my unfeigned and decided testimony to their wisdom and their utility. They are numerous, indeed, but without prolixity; and they are strict, but without austerity. They lead these little ones into habits of cleanliness, regularity, and all those lesser kinds of morals which are called ornamental in the higher ranks, but which in the lower, as we know from experience, are particularly necessary, and are closely connected with the same tractable and attentive turn of mind which prompts them to fulfil their more important duties. They guard these objects of your care from the indiscreet, and, under some circumstances, I must call it the presumptuous interference of fond and misguided parents. They secure and forward the improvement of the scho-

lars, by laying upon their masters such injunctions as are too clear to be misunderstood, and too positive to be evaded. They are calculated to give the most extensive and beneficial effects to your charity, by convincing those who co-operate with you that their kind exertions are not in vain—that, under the inspection of judicious and well-disposed governors, no alarming or inveterate evil can exist—that habitual indolence will meet with discouragement—and that flagrant wickedness will not escape detection and punishment. Your benevolence, therefore, is of that perfect and rational kind which in some inquiries, the result of which the time will not permit me to set before you, I have accurately examined. It is neither narrowed by what is too little, nor dissipated upon what is too much. It unites judgment with zeal. It pursues a right end, by means which are themselves apparently and uniformly right.

You will permit me, however, to select two regulations, which I read with much satisfaction, though I am aware that, among superficial and captious observers, one of them may be charged with unkindness, and the other with illiberality. The parents, I see, are forbidden to have any access to their children without express permission from the master or mistress. Now one great end of your institution is to preserve young persons from the sordid prejudices and the profligate examples, to which they may be exposed in their own families; and this advantage is of singular importance to the poor, for a reason which may not have been suffi-

ciently noticed. The sons of the affluent, by being fixed in public or in private places of education, are, for a time at least, most happily removed from the injudicious fondness and infectious morals of their parents. Their diligence is there animated by emulation. Their early prepossessions are subdued by a freer communication of sentiment with their comrades. Their better propensities are encouraged by a sentiment of honour, which expands and refines itself among numbers, who, from the dread of infamy or the desire of praise, are actuated by the same principles. Their growing vices are crushed by the seasonable interposition of authority—by admonitions which they cannot despise with impunity —and by restraints which they cannot resist without disgrace. But the children of the poor, if abandoned to the consequences of their poverty, are shut out from all participation of these and similar advantages. Partly from the narrowness of their resources, and partly from the confined circle of their acquaintance, they are compelled to live almost perpetually under the eye and under the influence of their parents — to be the spectators of reluctant labour or incorrigible sloth, or of undisguised and most unrestrained intemperance—to be the hearers of clamorous discord, of sullen murmurings, and desperate profaneness — to be confederates in petty mischief, or in crafty dishonesty, or in more daring and outrageous violence. All these evils lose much of their deformity in the minds of the young when they return with each returning day—when they are contrasted with no better scenes—and especially when

they are recommended and almost consecrated by precedent in those persons by whose kindness they are fed, by whose commands they are governed, however unwisely, and to whom they are accustomed to look up with some degree of affection and reverence. But all these evils are also averted or mitigated by the barriers, which you have thrown up between children yet uncorrupted and parents who are habitually corrupted — between children, who are disposed to submit, and parents who would encourage them to refuse submission — between children, who, if they were left to themselves, would be humble and grateful in their situation, and parents who, not understanding your plan from ignorance, or not approving it from perverseness, would teach them to be querulous and ungrateful. On the contrary, disorder, discontent, and disobedience, would more or less find their way into your school, if you permitted an indiscriminate intercourse between the young, who from their time of life have a sense of deference to their superiors, and the old, who from their more advanced time of life, also have an unlimited confidence in their own judgment—between the young, whom you may control, and the old, who think themselves independent —between the young, to whom the means of being virtuously intructed are here offered, and the old, who are too busy or too idle, too confirmed in their errors, and too hardened in their habits, to receive instruction. Upon the above-mentioned rule, therefore, I bestow my hearty commendation.

I observe, also, that you suffer no children to be

admitted who are not of the National Church; and that, in conformity to this restriction, you have enjoined a constant attendance upon public worship, and have directed all private instructions of the religious kind to be drawn from some approved writers who belong to the Establishment. Now it were unjust in the extreme to accuse you of any undue partiality, for acting upon the same principles which all other religious communities adopt in the education of their youth, and for which they neither are censured by the members of the Church, nor ought to be censured by any impartial and intelligent observer of human life. The charge of prejudice, in the perverted sense of the word, may, indeed, be retorted upon every party by whom it is produced; and in its proper signification, I would hope, it can be produced by no party upon just grounds. You bring up these children, then, in an early and serious conformity to that mode of religion to which the legislative wisdom of your country has given an avowed, and, I trust, well-founded preference — which holds out the most powerful incentives to a spirit of reasonable and fervent piety—and which naturally tends to impress the unbiassed minds of youth with sentiments of confidence and of respect, from the antiquity of its institution, from the decency of its ceremonies, from the simple and energetic language of its devotional forms, from the judicious and edifying doctrines which are generally delivered by its teachers. But you do not encourage, and God forbid that you ever should encourage them, to entertain any contemptuous and un-

charitable opinions of those, who differ from us about abstruse points of speculation, or about the observance of external rites. You do not cherish in their tender minds either the fierceness of bigotry or the extravagances of fanaticism. You do not rashly obtrude upon them those controversial writings, the tendency of which is too often to generate Pharisaical pride, and to mingle a settled and determined hatred of our neighbour, with a very confused, and it may be wavering love of God. You teach them to exercise their own religious liberty in that manner which you conceive to be warranted by the revealed Word; and you, by implication, bid them leave other men to the undisturbed enjoyment of the same liberty, without arraigning their sincerity, and without insulting what you suppose their mistakes.

Whatever may be said about the rights of private judgment—and much I am sure has been said without sufficient discrimination of the circumstances and advantages which different degrees of talent or improvement, different ages, different dispositions, and different situations in life, must furnish, to qualify us for exercising those rights wisely, or even safely—but whatever may be said upon the subject—with whatever ability it may be defended — with whatever vehemence it may be enforced — I am warranted by long and unprejudiced observation in saying, that the minds of young persons never should be perplexed with religious disputes. The best way of guarding them from what you think wrong in such matters, is to teach them soberly, se-

riously, and frequently, what you think right. The irritability of their tempers, the grossness of their conceptions, and the scantiness of their knowledge, peculiarly disqualify them for decision; and therefore you ought to exclude them from partial and premature inquiries into topics upon which they cannot decide. You ought, I say it again and again, to exclude them, from a regard to their peace of mind, to their innocence, and to all the amiable virtues of humility and charity, which such inquiries, at such a period and in such stations, usually check in their growth.

It is easy, no doubt, to gain attention from vulgar curiosity, and from credulous ignorance; but it is not so easy to rectify prejudices that are once conceived against persons, in the very first associations of ideas about things. It is easy to tell your children that this sect is plunged in heresy, or that church stands on the verge of idolatry—that one teacher is a blind bigot, and another a crafty impostor; but it is not so easy to allay the rancour, which early and frequent representations of this sort will introduce into the bosoms both of those who employ them and of those who hear them. For these reasons, the most intelligible, and therefore the most important doctrines of religion, should alone be proposed to children, and they should not only be dissuaded, but I had almost said intimidated, from indulging a spirit of religious contention, before they have acquired any settled principles of judging, or what is of greater consequence, before they have formed any rooted habits of any one duty towards

God or towards man. Indeed the most useful, and let me assure you, upon the evidence of my own experience, the most arduous province of education, is to introduce such habits early, and to fix them strongly; and doubtless he that considers the real constitution of the human mind, will studiously abstain from attempting to convey superfluous, and it may be dangerous precision, upon the more obscure points of faith, till the more plain and the more instructive are distinctly apprehended, and steadily believed. In communicating even these, a good Christian will find that an ample field is opened to him for his diligence, be it ever so unwearied, and for his zeal, be it ever so ardent. He is to fix the wandering, to rouse the sluggish, and to repress the audacious. He is to soften those terrors, with which the solemn and majestic aspect of religion at first overwhelms every mind not accustomed to the contemplation of it. He is to prevent the frequent returns of devotion itself from producing either languid indifference or bold familiarity. He is to elevate the feeble and groveling conceptions of these little ones, to such subjects as are too pure and too sacred to intermingle with those gross ideas, which are excited by the objects of sense. He is to renew impressions which the daily scenes of life—which the pleasures and even the employments—which the wild conversation and the gay reflections of the young are effacing perpetually. By such methods of instruction, and such only, can he train up children in the way wherein they should walk, and establish those sound and

active principles which may secure them, when they are old, against departing from it. Be it your praise to have kept in view all these momentous purposes, not by casting before these young ones a doctrine which they may slight, or a precept which they may disobey — not by enjoining a few desultory and slovenly offices of piety—not by telling them *once*, or *merely* telling them, that they have a Creator, a Redeemer, and a Sanctifier, but, by associating these high thoughts with a conscientious sense of duty, and by recalling them again and again to their most serious consideration. By these means, you will in such a manner habituate them to the performance of the first great commandment as to prepare them for obedience to the second, which is like unto it. By thus inculcating upon others the love of God, you will discharge no inconsiderable part of the love which is due from yourselves, as social creatures, to your neighbour; and the rewards which await you will abundantly prove that in so doing you have acted according to the purest dictates of that third and equally natural kind of love, which, as sensible creatures, you must feel for yourselves, and which, as reasonable and as religious creatures, you may be said to owe to yourselves, because, as the measure of your love to others, it has been adduced, and virtually approved, by the Heavenly author and finisher of our faith.

# SERMON XLII.

MATTHEW xxii. 39.

*And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

FROM the mixed characters of men—from the variety of faculties with which they are endowed—from the degrees in which those faculties operate in various circumstances—and from the consequences of their actions, which sometimes affect others conjointly with themselves, and sometimes themselves exclusively of others, it may be difficult to unfold their affections in their more complicated state, and to determine the measure upon which any one upon the whole predominates. In those, too, who undertake to explain the properties and energies of the mind there is a strong love of simplicity, which, however favourable to our investigations in the natural world, always narrows our inquiries, and warps our conclusions about moral causes. Some men have endeavoured, preposterously, I think, and extravagantly, to push out our social affections beyond the limits which our Creator has assigned them, and have employed all the powers of their gloomy rhetoric to increase our sensibility for others

under events which we cannot control—to send the mind out in quest of pain and disasters—to raise a sigh for every sorrowful tale—and to force a tear upon every spectacle of misery. The tempers of these writers were no doubt deeply tinged with melancholy, and, spreading a gloom over all the objects of their contemplation, gave them a confirmed habit of weeping with those that weep, but drew off their attention from those brighter scenes which might animate us to rejoice with those who rejoice. But we have seen already that our benevolence is in fact not so extensive—that contiguity forms a relation by which our imaginations and our passions find an easy transition from ourselves to others—but that the indifference, or at least the faint and momentary concern we feel about the interests of those whom we can neither serve nor injure, is, upon the whole, a wise provision of our Maker—that nothing would be eventually gained by a change—that the affection is strong enough to influence us in our conduct—and that, being made stronger, it might disturb our tranquillity without increasing our virtue.

Others there are, who, from mistaken notions about the proper dignity of man, have attempted, not merely to control, but to crush and annihilate, all our selfish regards—to stifle the more tender emotions of our social affections—and to place our supreme perfection and felicity in a certain magnanimity and fierceness of character, which they distinguish by the name of self-command. But this system, however brilliant in theory, would, in practice, neither be possible, nor indeed desirable; for the

love of ourselves is often a just as well as an advantageous principle of action. It is necessary to the preservation as well as to the comforts of our existence — it draws from sensibility aided by reason every excellence to which the boasted quality of self-command aspires—it adorns us with all the amiable virtues of prudence and moderation; and sometimes produces a larger stock of physical happiness to ourselves and to others than would arise from an indiscriminate, unremitting, and exclusive attention to the interests of others.

Hence, though the love of our neighbour is directly enjoined in the text, the love of ourselves, so far from being forbidden, is implicitly approved; for though the kinds and the degree of it are not explained, some kind and some degree must be meant when it is stated as a fact, and must be approved, too, when it is employed as a rule of direction for the discharge of a very important duty. In no sense of the word could it be right to love our neighbour, if in every sense of the words it were wrong to love ourselves. Indeed, the precepts of our holy religion in this, as in all other cases, correspond with the dictates of true philosophy. Both consider man as a being endowed with various appetites and affections, with a capacity for reflection, with a moral sense which, though it be not an instinct, but rather a power of judging, resulting from the aggregate of all his other faculties, is as inseparable from us as instinct, and claims a higher right over our actions than any one faculty, appetite, or affection. The one commands, and the other teaches us, upon the supposition that

all the several parts of our nature conspire to make up a regular whole, and therefore that these parts have not only their distinct provinces, but bear a real, unalterable, and most momentous relation to each other. To examine in what that relation consists, and what may be the tendency of it to forward our well-being, is the province of philosophy. The office of religion is to prescribe such duties as are suited to that relation, and promote that tendency.

With this principle, then, in view, I proceed to consider, in the fourth place, the respect which benevolence, both as an affection and a duty, *bears to the whole of our nature.* Man is a social as well as a sensible being; he is enabled to increase the happiness of others, as well as to pursue his own, and therefore he is endowed with affections which may animate, and is subject to obligations which may direct him to attend to both. The principle by which he aims at his own good is self-love, and that by which he aims at the good of another is benevolence. Many subordinate affections constitute each of these principles, and the actions which flow from them are sometimes referred to the general, and sometimes to the particular cause, as, when we say that a compassionate action is benevolent, or the pursuit of any worldly good is selfish. But those affections themselves are gradually formed from particular and detached instances, in which we first receive without any settled purpose of pleasure and pain, and without any settled purpose too we give pleasure and pain to others. But what was particular in a course of time became general, and what was

general became also itself a particular species of some other faculty more than others. By self-love, then, and by benevolence, I mean not any one detached affection, but a general principle of action. By the one we primarily regard our own happiness, independently of that of others; and by the other, the happiness of others, independently of our own. Both may be traced up to sensation—both are indefinitely multiplied and enlarged by experience and reflection. Each of them may act independently of the other, or in opposition; and each of them also may be counteracted by some coarser appetite indulged to excess, and by subordinate affection when corrupted or perverted. To benevolence, as a general principle, we refer friendship, filial or parental love, compassion for the distressed, and sympathy with the prosperous. Chastity and sobriety, the desire of fame or wealth, the dread of infamy and poverty, are among the constituents of self-love. I give this written enumeration, not as complete in itself, but as sufficient for the purpose for which I would employ it; and that purpose is, to show that, in the due subordination of both these principles to each other consist both our virtue and our happiness. The very early appearance, and the very vigorous operation, of those powers, which in their fuller growth have assumed the names either of self-love or benevolence, tempt us to suppose that they are coeval with our birth. The capacity for them must indeed have been given, or neither of them could at any period of our lives have existed. But in the form under which they are seen in active life, and be-

come the subjects of moral speculation, they are in reality factitious, bearing indeed a very strong resemblance in all mankind, but operating with more or less force, and moving in this or that direction, from a variety of causes—from the examples of others—from the influence of outward objects—from the accidental advantages or faults of education—and from the bent which early habits have given to the exercise of all our various affections.

There is said to be an abstract desire of happiness which attends every intelligent being through the whole of his existence. It were easy, however, to show from the frame of our minds, that such a desire does not in such a degree exist. Yet very general desires are certainly formed at an early period, and among them is the desire of happiness, which gains the pre-eminence, and is most conspicuous; and because all our actions as social and responsible creatures must affect us as sensible creatures, and, whether good or bad, must produce pleasure in the gratification, or pain in the disappointment, we may properly allow that a desire of happiness has a real existence—that it has a very forcible influence upon our behaviour, and that a contrary desire, as a general principle, is shocking, and utterly impossible. As man certainly was made for happiness, his own private welfare must be the chief, though not the sole end of every pursuit in which he is engaged; and if we were so formed that the contemplation of the external good which befals others, rather than of that which befals ourselves, gave us satisfaction, this satisfaction would in fact be our proper happiness, and the love

which we bear ourselves would prompt us to promote the happiness of other beings with a settled view to ourselves, and even without any emotions of love for them. But as we are not so formed—as the good which belongs to ourselves is more interesting to us than that which belongs to others, and therefore becomes the object of more ardent desire and more steady pursuit, the irregularities of self-love are controled by another principle, which teaches us to give up some private gratification when it interferes with the greater good of others.

The ultimate end which every man has in view for himself must be happiness; but the ultimate end of each action may be inconsistent with the general end, or it may be performed without any reference to it. The ultimate good of the species is also the object of benevolence; but in the particular exercise of it the ultimate end in view may be inconsistent with the general end, and performed also without a reference to it.

As the gratification of an appetite, which solicits one passion, may be destructive of the happiness which self love has in view, and which is to be attained in the aggregate by the gratification of many appetites, which cannot be gratified if some one is gratified to excess, so an access of kindness to one man who is not related to us may disqualify us for promoting the greater good of those who are more nearly related to us; and, on the contrary, an excessive affection to them may diminish our regard and weaken our affection towards our more distant relations and

friends. Thus it appears that the very instruments which self-love or benevolence respectively employ, may in particular cases counteract the general principle, and that not only self-love may be at variance with benevolence, but that in pursuing our own good we may oppose self-love, and in pursuing the good of others we may oppose benevolence. But, from the opposition of self-love to benevolence, we can no more infer that benevolence is not natural to man, than, from the opposition of some appetite to self-love, we can infer that self-love is not natural to man. How then may these differences be reconciled? By having recourse to our moral sense;—it is equally natural to man with self-love and with benevolence—natural I mean as forming a part of his nature—as being one faculty by which he acts, and by which he acts too with a view to happiness. Nay this very reason itself had a considerable share in forming both the principles of self-love and of benevolence, as general principles of action. In self-love reason directed us to look for its gratification in a certain proportion of wealth, or of fame, or of honour, or of pleasure. Reason directed our benevolence to look for its gratification in the happiness of children, or friends, or our neighbours, or in some one or more objects preferably to others. But in particular instances the influence of reason is necessary to point the aim of every action, to fix the measures of every affection, and to prevent them not only from jarring with each other, but from disappointing themselves.

Every affection we should observe may even

counteract itself by pressing its pursuit beyond the proper value of its object. Thus the love of wealth, which is a selfish affection, disappoints us of the pleasure for which wealth was at first pursued, converts the means into an end, and produces unceasing and unabated anxiety, even though the end be gained. The love of a child may become so extravagant as not only to absorb the other benevolent affections, but to produce immoderate and unavailing desires for the good of its objects. In both these cases, the predominance and violent tendency of some one affection, not only counteracts the general principle, either of self-love or benevolence, but defeats itself too, and that defeat shows the necessity of having recourse to some other faculty. Now provision has amply been made by our Creator for the due regulation of all our affections, when he planted in us the power of conscience—a power which presides, or has a right to preside, over every stage of our moral agency—over every propensity and wish of the heart, and to which our social and our selfish affections are alike subjected.

We may therefore pronounce not only those systems to be false which make self-love or benevolence an exclusive principle of action, but those, which including both at the same time, exclude the authority of conscience. But further. To every affection there is a correspondent object; when this affection becomes warmed it puts on the stronger aspect of passion, and every passion implies a tendency towards this or that object, without immediate distinction of the means by which they are ob-

tained; for the knowledge of those means is gained by experience or observation, and we employ them from some other cause than the passion, which is intent alone upon the end or gratification. Our desires will often be fixed upon objects, the attainment of which would bring misery upon ourselves and others. But the passion as we have said can attend only to the end. We must, therefore, have some other faculty for distinguishing the means, and this faculty is reason. But reason of itself considers the means, not as right or wrong, but as sufficient or insufficient, and it considers them in reference to the end at which the passion aims, and not in reference to any other end which may be the object of any other passion. The mere perception, therefore, of sufficiency in the means has no tendency to control the violence of the affection, but rather to let it loose upon action. But the action itself may be wrong—the end may be hurtful to ourselves or others; and therefore God has planted within us an authoritative principle, which not only suggests to us the idea of right and wrong, but authoritatively commands us to prefer the one and to reject the other. Every affection and every sense judges with the aid of reason of its own object, and of its own object alone. The ear judges of harmony, the eye of beauty, avarice of wealth, ambition of power; but no affection and no sense extends its judgment to the objects of other affections and other appetites. Love judges not of resentment, nor resentment of love. They are distinct from each other. Their pursuits are opposite, but they

neither approve nor disapprove, except of their own objects. It is therefore the great moral faculty of conscience which presides over all the other principles of our nature, which assigns them their proper degrees of strength, and which bestows censure or applause as we have obeyed or disobeyed its decisions. In all our judgments, therefore, concerning benevolence itself, we are not merely to consider it as an affection but as a duty—not merely as a source of pleasure which may be immediately perceived, but of a pleasure which reflection may heighten—not merely as a part of our nature, but as connected with other parts, or as cognizable with them before the supreme tribunal of conscience.

Great, and I fear dangerous mistakes have arisen upon this subject from those writers who have resolved all virtue into benevolence, and who, rejecting the authority of conscience, have attended only to the pleasure which arises from the exercise of benevolence, and which, according to their representation, is a sufficient motive and a sufficient reason for exercising it. The obvious consequence of this omission would be, that if any man were not convinced that his own happiness would be more effectually promoted by promoting the happiness of his fellow-creatures —a conviction which self-love is too prone to resist —a conviction which our harsher affections and baser appetites are for ever counteracting — a conviction which reason itself sometimes impresses but faintly—a conviction which, amidst the conflict of our contending passions, the power of conscience can alone control—such a man would not only be

impelled, but authorized by a regard to private good, to indulge every affection which in his apprehension leads to that good—to indulge it, I mean, amidst all possible circumstances, and to the utmost possible extent. He would oppose all those social affections, and neglect all those social offices which tend to counteract the great law of his nature and private happiness; and while all his regards and all his pursuits were confined to himself alone, this distinguishing attention to self-interest would be accompanied by an uniform sentiment of self-approbation.

Now reflect upon the dismal effects which such a persuasion would have upon the man himself and upon society. Society would be deprived of his consolation in sorrow, his advice in difficulty, his assistance in adversity. He would himself be deprived of all the sweet and endearing satisfactions which flows from the exercise of kindness itself—from the gratitude of those who have received—and from the esteem of those who behold and approve it. He would lose the end, not merely of benevolence, which he deliberately pursues not, but of self-love, which he deliberately does pursue; for by acting in opposition to the sentiments and the example of other men—in opposition to the established order of human life—in opposition to that harmony of interests and feelings by which the sorrows of men are softened, and their joys are multiplied, he would be subject to the most mortifying disappointments; and would find all the selfish, all the kind, and all the unkind affections of mankind, conspiring to dis-

appoint him; for the prudent man would not trust him—the generous man could not love him, and the revengeful man would hate and persecute him.

Now I have stated, that private happiness must be the ultimate end of every active being; and I add, in vindication of this appointment, that self-love and benevolence, if properly adjusted, will upon the whole, most effectually secure it. But such an adjustment never can take place, if we consider benevolence only as an affection, and not as a duty. If we consider it only as referred to our reason, and not to our conscience. Nay, if we view it without regard to all the other affections which, together with reason and conscience, make up the whole of our nature. We have already seen the necessity of attending to reason and to conscience; let us now view it more particularly in reference to self-love as a general principle of action.

Now a general principle aims, we must observe, at external things as the means of good; but the particular affections rest in external things themselves. Thus self-love coolly determines us to aim at wealth or power for the sake of advantages, which wealth or power may respectively bring with them, and which are supposed to make up the sum of happiness, which self-love pursues. But the love of wealth and of power, though subordinate affections to self-love, are distinct from it as a principle, and terminate in the external objects themselves. Thus to self-preservation it is necessary that we satify our hunger. But hunger, as an appetite, rests upon the immediate gratification itself. Benevo-

lence is a general principle of love for the good of others; but compassion, friendship, filial affection, terminate in the several objects themselves, and have a gratification distinct from that which belongs to a general principle. The immediate good of others and of ourselves may be promoted by particular affections; but every instance in which we promote the good of others or of ourselves, may not be consistent with the attainment of the end, which is proposed by the general principle. Affection to one man may precipitate us into such acts of cruelty or injustice as are inconsistent with the general principles of benevolence. Attachment to one gratification may, as we before said, deprive us of others, the loss of which contradicts the general principle of self-love. In order, therefore, that self-love or benevolence should attain their several ends, the subordinate affection in every case should be regulated by a sense of duty; and here it is worth while to observe, that the highest moral approbation attends those actions, whether prompted by our selfish or social affections, which a sense of duty is employed to control. We are happy in the successful pursuits of another man, and we applaud the diligence or skill which procured his success when he was acting with a view to his own good. But we feel a much stronger approbation, when we find him giving up a part of that success—stifling some affection which impels him to pursue it—keeping in a state of inaction some faculty which would enable him to attain it, from a regard to justice or benevolence, as involving the good of

others. We commend and admire every instance of active and zealous benevolence. But we bestow a yet greater commendation when the affection is so strong, that we are in danger of losing sight of reasonable self-love, and are obliged to put forth an effort for throwing it under the restraints of prudence; our judgments are in such cases employed in balancing one affection against another—one principle against another—one part of human nature against another part—and determining, from a view of the whole subject, whether it is fit, in the given case, that the selfish should control the social, or the social the selfish. From those judgments arise the distinctions which are usually made between what is called a gross and a rational self-interest, and between instinctive and rational benevolence. We are shocked at the meanness and rapacity of gross self-interest—we are disgusted at the extravagancies and weakness of instinctive benevolence. But rational self-interest and rational benevolence are always approved by the moral sense of others, as well as by our own moral sense, invested with the authority of conscience; and though benevolence is more approved than self-interest, the reason of that approbation seems to be because the instances of it are more rare—because the attainment of it is more difficult—and because that attainment implies a stronger and more constant prevalence both of our social affections over such as are basely and mischievously selfish, and of the reflective principle itself over the wrong tendency of those very social affections themselves.

Now the approbation which is thus given to self-interest and benevolence, when they are rational, not only shows that a sense of right and wrong is affixed to both, but that as means of happiness they are not incompatible; for as self-love would never be approved if it excluded all regard to others, neither would benevolence be approved if it totally neglected, and by neglecting, destroyed the happiness of the individual. But the opposition in which each of these principles sometimes stands to the other, has induced those who would give the preference to self-love to pronounce that the opposition is perpetual, and quite irreconcileable, and to reason upon it in this manner: Happiness, say they, is the end of our being; self-love alone secures the attainment of that happiness; and therefore benevolence, which obstructs it, must give way to self-love. Now this very method of stating the argument allows that such a principle of benevolence really exists. But then it represents the consequences of it as destructive to that end, which is confessedly the supreme and ultimate end of our being. Now, however we may rack our ingenuity in supporting and adorning such positions, every man has a secret feeling, the very moment in which they are proposed to him, that some fallacy lurks underneath; and he is alarmed too at the consequences which flow from it in degrading that social part of our nature, which we are accustomed to consider as the most amiable in ourselves, and the most useful to others. In considering the whole of our nature, we find something which points to the individual, and something which

points to society; and if we look upon the world around us, we find objects corresponding to our affections, both those which relate to ourselves, and those which relate to others; and having found them we justly consider none of our affections and appetites as defective in themselves. But if the gratification of self-love and of benevolence be incompatible, all the social affections, which are branches of benevolence, are not only superfluous but hurtful; they are defects of the very worst kind, for they impede that very purpose to which both the social and the selfish should be ultimately subservient. The fact however is, that by the constitution of our nature, both of them, when acting in due subordination to the dictates of our conscience, promotes our true and proper happiness; and though a competition will sometimes subsist between their respective claims, such a competition is not peculiar to self-love or benevolence, considered as general principles, but extends to all other parts of our nature, to all other affections which like them have a visible effect on our conduct, and which respectively tend to our well-being or misery. The love of pleasure hastens us on to some gratification which the love of wealth forbids, and the love of wealth to some gratification which the love of praise forbids, yet each has its proper object, and that object may, in some circumstances, be properly pursued. A competition between those objects does not always exist, and when it does exist the contest may be decided by an appeal either to self-love or to benevolence, or to both;

under the power of conscience. Self-love, looking to its ultimate end, bids us prefer the object of the love of praise to the object of the love of wealth, as being more conducive to that end. Benevolence, looking to its ultimate end, bids us prefer the object of the love of wealth to the object of the love of praise, because the attainment of it will enable us to act with more effect for the good of others. Thus there are situations in which either of them may be innocently gratified for its own sake, and there also are situations in which each of them for the sake of our fellow-creatures may be meritoriously gratified in opposition to another.

Let us then apply this reasoning to the contrariety which sometimes exists between the love of our neighbour and of ourselves. Self-love fixes upon some end of which pleasure, power, or opulence, may severally be the means. Benevolence, which, as we have before seen, may control a particular affection, may also control the general principle of self-love. It may require us to give up some, or all of the means, which self-love would employ for its own end. It does not always require that sacrifice, and when it does require it, conscience must determine whether the claims of the one or the other are to be admitted. The decisions of conscience itself will be regulated by circumstances, and those circumstances may involve the proportion between the good conferred upon a ther, and the good relinquished by ourselves—t personal merit of the claimant—his near or r re dis t relation to us—the good y to make of what

we bestow—the affections we bear, and the duties we owe, to others, as well as to him and to ourselves. The affection of benevolence would prompt us to relieve him if we could. But there is a proper restraint in self-love from conferring that relief. Here then conscience interposes, and fixes the point in which duty lies. But then self-love may often be gratified independently of benevolence, and benevolence independently of self-love, where there is no competition; for when we relieve others self-love does not always suggest to us that we are deserting any interests of our own; and when we promote any interest of our own, benevolence does not always suggest to us that we are deserting the interests of others.

It should further be observed, that as in the exercise of benevolence no struggle will exist between that benevolence and self-love, as general principles, so there is often no competition between benevolence and any lower affection—no perception of our own good, whether near or distant, but only perception of a good belonging to another man, and of our own inclination and power to promote it. The competition, therefore, between self-love and benevolence is not peculiar to benevolence as such. Any other appetite or affection, as well as the general principle of benevolence, may sometimes be opposed to the general principle of self-love. Even the particular affections which produce in detail those very gratifications in the aggregate, of which self-love finds its own gratifications, may be at variance with it, and by gaining its

own end, may disappoint the ultimate end which self-love has in view. It follows, therefore, that our well-being must be most effectually promoted by the due subordination of all our affections to each other—of the good of the individual to the good of the species—of general principles, and of the particular affections which aim at that good to the power of conscience—or, in other words, in the due subordination of all the various parts of our nature to the whole.

Now God Almighty has most wisely adapted the complex form of our minds to the various parts which we have to perform—to the duties we owe to others and to ourselves—to the affections which lead us more directly to the good of the one and of the other—and to that general desire of happiness which will receive its highest and purest gratifications from the just balance of those affections, and from the full discharge of those duties. The immediate, vivid, and almost uninterrupted perceptions of self-love, too, are doubtless a sufficient incentive to the indulgence of those appetites and affections which point to ourselves. But we know that the affections which aim at the good of others, are not so frequently called into action—that in the moment of competition between them and their social affections, our partialities, our fears, and hopes, turn the scale in favour of the selfish—that in all men the social have a real, indeed, but in most men a feeble and inconstant efficacy—and that to give them their proper influence, all their amiable qualities, and all their beneficial consequences, should again and

again be set before us. They must, therefore, be represented not only as parts of our nature, but as claiming a rank among the best parts—as eminently conducive to the well-being of society—as attracting, beyond all other virtues, the love and the confidence of those among whom we live—as approved by the suffrages of the wise and good, who behold their effects approved by that sacred power of conscience which regulates their energies—approved by religion, which enlarges the sphere of their operation, consecrates all their efforts, and exalts their aims from every temporal consideration of honour and advantage to the rewards of eternity, and to the applauding sentence of a most wise and benevolent Creator.

V. Let us proceed, in the last place, for reasons which shall now be mentioned, to correct some mistakes and to obviate some objections which have arisen, partly from the ambiguities of language, and partly from the refinements of speculation.

I need not apologize for the argumentative form in which some parts of this discussion will be produced. They are addressed to the more enlightened hearers of this respectable assembly; and they will be succeeded by observations of a more familiar kind and more general use.

Various as are the systems which have been contrived to explain the nature of virtue, we must allow that all of them have some foundation in the human mind, and that all have upon the whole a tendency to improve it, whether we place it in prudence or in

benevolence, in truth or public utility, in the fitness of things or in the suitableness of our affections to the objects which excite them; each of these principles is certainly founded in nature, each must enter more or less into every correct and comprehensive scheme of morals, and each from a particular or imperfect view of our minds may become an occasion of error. Yet the writers, from whom these systems proceeded, it must be confessed, however they may have failed by indulging their propensity to account for all appearances from one principle, and to combine the most various excellencies into one splendid assemblage, meant themselves to promote the cause of virtue—they have not attempted to degrade its general qualities—they have not laboured to discourage mankind from the pursuit of it. But, upon the subject of benevolence, opinions have been propagated, which, even if we should impute them to vanity rather than to malignity in their respective advocates, unquestionably have a most ungracious aspect, and most alarming tendency. The gloomy subtlety of Hobbes, the acuteness and vivacity of Mandeville, and the most captivating eloquence of a noble foreigner have, we know, been employed in defending the principle of selfishness.

The good sense of mankind may, indeed, have prevented these tenets from obtaining general reception, and the better feelings of the heart have in some measure counteracted their baleful influence. They cast however a gloom over every reflecting mind. They require some effort to disen-

tangle the coarse and strong texture of the arguments by which they have been defended; and in the minds of many men, who are ashamed to confess it, they have produced something more, I fear, than a temporary suspension of judgment upon the alliance between benevolence and virtue. Indeed, if they so far interest our intellectual vanity, as to make us adopt them, even in theory, there is danger lest the frequent recurrence of the ideas themselves, and the strenuous exertions we put forth to show their congruity with fact, should gradually contract and harden the heart. As liars are said to believe the falsehoods which they have often uttered, so the habit of defending a singular opinion imperceptibly warps the judgment; the strangeness of the opinion itself wears off every day—new relations are perceived — opposition animates — victory confirms—new proofs are struck out—and the pleasure we at first received in the novelty of a paradox, is at last transferred to what we think the solidity of truth.

Even where the selfish system is not deliberately taken up as a rule of conduct, it will in particular instances furnish men with excuses for refusing to be benevolent—it damps the satisfaction we are accustomed to feel from the performance or the contemplation of kind actions—it begets the habit of imputing sordid and ungenerous motives to other men, and secretly inclines us to indulge the same motives in ourselves. When therefore we are engaged in explaining and enforcing the religious precept of loving our neighbour, it surely is a matter of some importance to detect the fallacy of those

reasonings which may lead us even to doubt concerning the possibility of obeying that precept.

Now we are told by Mr. Hobbes, " that compassion is an indirect kind of fear, or a fiction of future calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the sense another man's calamity." The great error of this definition is, that it represents an occasional adjunct of pity as its efficient cause, and that it confounds the two different objects of two different feelings.

In point of fact, we often pity the distresses of of others, without any remembrance of our own; and even when our own are remembered, the fear which they occasion, is distinct from the pity which we feel for another man—is generally subsequent to that pity—and in many cases is less vivid and less intense. In tracing the origin and progress of benevolence under the second head, I have shown that our own pleasures and our own pains at first carry on our thoughts to the pleasures and pains of our fellow-creatures, and that from the accession of new ideas, and from the vigour which our affections gain by exercise, we by degrees lose sight of ourselves, and our thoughts are entirely and solely occupied with the concerns of others. But, when fear, at any later period, and after the just formation of the benevolent principle, is mixed with pity, we may feel it both on account of another man's misery and of our own. Yet the pity is entirely confined to his misery; we do not fear our friend for our own sake, and we do pity him for his own sake—we pity him when he suffers evil, but we should fear him if he were in the opposite situation of being

able and willing to inflict it. If fear were the predominant sentiment, we should reserve for our own use, that force which pity incites us to exert for the good of another, though the evil to be relieved were greater than the evil to be prevented; and accordingly, if men feel not compassion, or if they feel it in vain, they profess to excuse themselves for not affording succour, lest they should lay themselves open to some vexatious inconvenience or some formidable danger. In this instance, then, fear is not only distinct from compassion, but clogs and counteracts it.

I deny not, that even the sight of misery in others which we pity or relieve may call up the remembrance of similar distress, which we have ourselves experienced, or set before us the prospect of similar distress, to which we are ourselves exposed. But I do deny, that there is any necessary connection between the two feelings, and I maintain that we may both fear without pity, and pity without fear; and I also maintain, that if the one feeling enlivens the other, it is still a distinct feeling itself, arises from a different cause, and points to a different object.

To a sense of our own misery we may be awakened by many external cases, towards which it is not possible to have a sense of compassion; and compassion too is often excited by a view of disastrous events, to which we are conscious of not being personally exposed, and of which the sight therefore, instead of disturbing us by fear, would raise only an opposite emotion of exultation and security. But, as I before observed, fear is an occasional, though not an

inseparable concomitant of compassion; for the spectacle of another man's misery may either bring back to us a particular remembrance of the same misery under which we have ourselves laboured, or a more general remembrance that we are liable to misery of some kind or other. If we are, at the time, oppressed by any misfortune, such a thought will occur quickly; for it is well known that the miserable are most prone to sympathize with the miserable. If we are in prosperous circumstances, the same thought may also present itself, and it generally does come in the way of cool reflection; but whether it enters the mind instantaneously in the one case, or remotely in the other, it doubtless may increase the sentiment of compassion. Upon both these cases however we must pause.

The unhappy weep with the unhappy; true—but this is not always a feeling in the production of which fear has the sole or chief concern, and we may be unhappy even without any experience of either feeling; for when the mind has been hardened by long and unalleviated calamity, fear itself is at last exhausted, and then it must be owned that the edge of compassion is very much blunted.

But when fear remains, compassion does not always accompany it; for we sometimes take pleasure in seeing others deprived of the pity from which we find ourselves excluded; and here doubtless there is a direct operation both of an unsocial and a selfish affection—an operation which extinguishes compassion, but does not stifle fear. There is indeed a situation in which selfishness does exist and

act together with compassion, as, when we are even glad to see others partakers of our calamity; but the selfish affection even here does not draw after it malignity, which could not co-exist with compassion. To our imaginations evil is lightened by being divided; yet this instance proves that fear and compassion are not the same; because this very idea of the division of the calamity, which lessens the fear, produces also a direct sentiment of pity to others, and an indirect expectation, that by others we shall be ourselves pitied. Again—it was said that when we are prosperous, the sense of our own prosperity may succeed the sight of another man's adversity, and invigorate the compassion which that adversity excited. But this does not always happen: for a long and immoderate enjoyment of worldly advantages often makes us insensible to the wants of the poor and the cries of the sorrowful. It appears, then, that neither the sense of our own calamity, nor that of our own prosperity, uniformly makes way for pity; and therefore that pity is not only a separate feeling, but may exist independently of any immediate influence from our own joys and our own grief.

Since very undue and undistinguishing stress has been laid upon the sight of another man's misery, as bringing with it a painful recollection of the evils which we have ourselves suffered, or by which we are threatened; it may be proper to state that self recollection frequently leads to feelings equally remote in appearance and in reality from benevolence. We have sometimes a transient emotion of rage

against inanimate objects, which reminds us of a personal defect, or of an encroaching danger, or of a past calamity. We are surprised into a sudden and involuntary dislike against persons, who are merely employed to communicate the intelligence of some disagreeable and alarming event; and from this circumstance alone I would observe that Hobbes's position about the effects, which the signs of our own misery may produce, is radically false, and that compassion is the very quality, the sole quality, which substitutes our social for our unsocial affections, or mingles them with the selfish, when those signs are perceived. For, if it should be said that the messenger of unpleasant tidings presents no spectacle of distress in himself, then I answer that there is no room for compassion; and if he does present that spectacle, fear for ourselves may prevent compassion to him; and in the instance of not preventing it, the cause which directly produces fear, and the cause which produces compassion, are in themselves different — the fear is upon our own account, and the compassion is upon his.

To render Hobbes's opinion probable, the ideas of compassion and of fear should be combined into one mass, so firmly as always to make a joint impression, and so closely as not to be distinguished ideally, unless by the nicest observation. But they in fact are held together by a slighter bond; they do not always introduce each other; and they can always be easily distinguished. They may be experienced, as we have seen, each without the other, where a distressed object comes before us; and in the greater

number of cases where the association becomes stronger, compassion is felt more exquisitely than fear. As the mind vibrates alternately from ourselves to others, compassion and fear may act in their turns, and neither influence nor temper one another. But if a struggle should arise between them, when they incite to action—if our own safety, to which we are impelled by the one, stands in direct and irreconcilable competition with the safety of a fellow creature, to which we are impelled by the other, then I am aware that the passion, which finally prevails will absorb and convert into itself the inferior, and produce a stronger effort. This prevalence too may depend upon our general character—upon a sudden turn of the imagination—or upon peculiar circumstances in our own situation compared with the situation of another man. But if compassion and fear may in this manner influence each other, so may other independent and contrary passions, as hope and anger, courage and fear. But who would say that courage is the same with fear; and who does not see that the transfusion of the one into the other, implies an original difference ?*

* "It has been remarked that the sight of persons in distress frequently give rise to three distinct perceptions; sorrow for the misery of our fellow creatures, satisfaction from a consciousness of our own exemption from that misery, and reflection upon our liableness to the same or other misery." *Butler.*

These ideas, I am aware, may follow each other closely; but they do not invariably follow, and when they do, they will exist in different degrees, and in every degree. They are and remain so distinct, as rarely to coalesce into any one sentiment, which can be called by any one name. If, however, it be right to resolve compassion into fear, because fear sometimes attends

A late writer has assigned four causes as making up the whole of the pleasure we feel in the exercise of beneficence. After stating that we are born without ideas, without vice, and without virtue, he says that "we are beneficent, first, to avoid the bodily pain of seeing men suffer; secondly, to enjoy an example of gratitude, which produces in us a distant hope of utility; thirdly, to exhibit an act of power, the exercise of which is always agreeable to us by recalling to mind the images of pleasure attached to that power; and fourthly, because the idea of happiness is constantly connected with the idea of beneficence, and this beneficence, conciliating the esteem and affection of men, may, like riches, be regarded as the means of avoiding pain and procuring pleasure."

In this representation there is much truth mixed

and facilitates the feeling of compassion; it must be equally right to resolve it into joy, because the consciousness of our exemption from misery is accompanied with joy; and it may often happen that the sentiment of joy will be stronger than the concomitant sentiment of fear, and therefore will have a greater right to give a name to compassion. But the truth is, that compassion is not always accompanied by the one or the other, and that when accompanied by either, even so as to be weaker than either, yet we never confound the feelings themselves or the objects—our own sufferings are still the objects of fear—our own security is the object of joy. But the misery of another man is the sole and proper object of compassion. All that can be inferred from the occasional conjunction of these three sentiments is, that joy and fear are species of sympathy, as well as compassion—that our Merciful Creator has made one sympathy attractive to another—and that, as in the events of life, our own happiness is really connected with the happiness of our fellow creatures, so in the energies of compassion the sense of one often becomes an aid to the sense of the other.

with much error. My general objection to it is that it accounts not for an emotion, but for the action which follows the emotion. But my particular objections to it are these: we certainly wish to escape the sight of pain; but we have a distinct wish to alleviate pain in others. That pain too cannot be styled merely a bodily pain; and in most of the instances where men are called beneficent, there is no sentiment at all of pain, for we procure good rather than alleviate evil; and though there is pleasure in increasing happiness, pain does not always arise either when we cannot, or do not increase it. Doubtless we wish to be the objects of gratitude; but we pity those who may never have it in their power to make any return; and indeed the chief pleasure we receive from gratitude is not in the reciprocation of external acts, but in the reciprocation of an internal sentiment of love. We can give up utility where the affection is secured; and we accept it reluctantly, when a favour is returned from a cold sense of justice rather than from a vigorous impulse of love. Doubtless we have a pleasure in exerting power; but an equal degree of pleasure for a time accompanies acts of malignity and of benevolence, for in both instances we are conscious of superiority to those whom we hurt and those whom we serve. We justly regard the esteem of mankind; but that esteem is a motive common to other virtues as well as to benevolence. We shall hereafter see that in particular exertions of benevolence no immediate regard either to utility or to fame, excites the affection or produces the action.

All the causes which this writer adduces, may have more or less share in forming the original principle; but they do not explain the whole of that principle—they do not explain the very case which he states of directing a child to put himself ideally in the condition of the wretched, for the purpose of training him up to benevolence. Pain surely may be avoided, gratitude expected, power exhibited, and esteem anticipated, without that process of the mind by which we make another man's misery even in imagination our own; and in minds habitually benevolent it is made our own without any direct view to all or either. It further deserves to be remarked too, that to account for the total sentiment of the pleasure arising from acts of beneficence is not to account for the feeling of benevolence itself; and even as an enumeration of the causes of pleasure, it is imperfect, since it omits the consciousness of rectitude, which is accompanied by a pleasing approbation, and it also omits the idea of future reward, which is hope, or a lower species of joy. Whatever opinions the writer himself might entertain as to the improbability of such a reward, the greater part of mankind think it probable. They feel its influence, in forming a general principle of benevolence, and therefore that influence, be it strong or weak, should not have been overlooked. I grant, however, that the causes which he has not overlooked, do, upon the hypothesis of association which I myself embrace, operate more or less in generating benevolence. But other causes also conspire with them, and the whole ultimately

form one assemblage which may be called a general love of mankind.

Mandeville traces up all our benevolent actions to vanity, the pleasures of which outweigh every consideration of the temporal interest which we relinquish to procure them. But surely the word vanity is here misapplied to actions, which deserve another and a nobler name. For the desire of being esteemed, when it prompts us to do what is really estimable, implies a love of the means, as well as of the end—a love of virtue itself, as well as of true glory, which is ever to be distinguished from the pursuit of false glory, and is exempt from all the littlenesses, and all the meannesses of real vanity. The leading and dangerous mistake of this writer is, that he confounds truth with falsehood—that he represents as the same, those desires which have some, though a very distant similitude—that he does not distinguish between a proper and improper regard to the sentiments of others—that he considers that passion as entirely and uniformly vicious, which becomes so in any degree, or in any circumstances and with any aims; and which, subsisting in a wrong degree, and in wrong circumstances, and with wrong aims, is soon recognized by the good sense of mankind, and instantly hunted down with scorn and derision.

But whatever may be the motive of those who pursue praise, let us ask what is the inducement for others to bestow it. We cannot suppose that all mankind will conspire in carrying on the imposture, which they may wish to be successful for themselves; and of the passion which fixes upon

fame for its object, we may observe that it is more jealous of its own claims, and more thrifty and reluctant in paying what is due to others, even than the love of wealth. What then is the quality in actions which vanquishes this reluctance? Their intrinsic merit surely. And if benevolence obtains a larger portion of praise, the only cause must be that it is, and appears to be, more meritorious. The patrons of the selfish system do not always seem to be either clear in their conceptions, or steady in their terms. But from the opposition that subsists between those, who indiscriminately ascribe our benevolence to a regard for wealth as one mean of temporal advantage, and those who impute it to the love of praise, whether as a mean or an end, we may safely conclude that it properly and essentially is produced by neither—that it is conjoined with them accidentally—and that separately from them it exists and acts with a fuller display of its own genuine and characteristic excellence.

The exterior advantages and the personal endowments of mankind, which at one time are the objects of admiration, are at another the objects of envy; but benevolence, while it attracts our love, disarms our envy. We depreciate wealth and power, beauty and genius, prudence and fortitude; but we rarely depreciate benevolence, because, as some philosophers would say, it is a quality at once most useful to others and most agreeable to ourselves; and because, as the Christian would add, the love of our neighbour is the surest criterion and the happiest effect of our love of God.

Numerous mistakes upon the subject of benevolence arise from a perverted use of the word *selfish*, which can be properly applied neither to the social nor unsocial affections, or, if applicable to one, must be equally applicable to the other. This perversion, however, is of considerable antiquity; and accordingly it has been expressly and formally refuted by a great philosopher, in his very masterly book upon morals. He there distinguishes between self-love, as a term of reproach, and a term of approbation. He allows that in some sense the man who desires and does what is most virtuous, and who lives under the habitual influence of the intellectual principle, *loves himself*, because he experiences, and wishes to experience the pleasures of a right conduct. But he assigns the reproachful term to those who place their chief good in money, in honour, or in pleasure, and who are habitually enslaved to the irrational part of the mind. Such he describes the greater part of the world, and by such he supposes the word self-love to have been distorted with sophistical ambiguity, and mischievously applied to men of a better character. In benevolent actions, no doubt, pleasure is obtained to ourselves and to others, and in general it is intended primarily to others, and secondly for ourselves; and hence it is remarkable, that if the pleasures aimed at for ourselves be pursued directly, or even preferably to the advantage procured for others, we should be disappointed of gaining it, because it depends upon the very circumstance, not of loving ourselves, or of doing good to ourselves, but of loving and doing good to other men. But if that pleasure be ulti-

mately gained by loving and doing good to them, the great purpose of those, who would resolve all our actions into selfishness, would be defeated. Now our own satisfaction, I readily grant, is the end of every action, whether it be morally good or bad; for that satisfaction generally arises from its being considered as physically good or bad, and what is physically bad, as such, can never be the object of choice. But it does not follow from hence, that when in consequence of resting our chief good in the pleasures of virtue, we promote the welfare of others, our actions are to be called selfish, unless we allow that every action in which we pursue satisfaction (and satisfaction is pursued in all) should be called by that name; and then whether right or wrong, or indifferent, they all partake of selfishness.

One source of our verbal inaccuracies is this—every particular affection, as well as every particular action, is properly our own, and therefore by parity of reasoning, every affection may be resolved into self-love. But such a use of terms is equally abhorrent from the language and the feelings of mankind. Nor can it be warranted by the *one* circumstance, in which all our affections and all our actions agree, namely, that they flow from ourselves, and are felt and done to gratify some inclination in ourselves. A real and intelligible difference will yet remain between the hatred and love of our neighbour, and between the love of our neighbour and of ourselves, though each may be a motive to action. In strict propriety, indeed, all our passions, except that of self-love, are primarily in themselves disinterested. Ambition, revenge, the love of plea-

sure, and even the love wealth, have no more claim to the appellation of selfishness than benevolence itself; and are to be distinguished from it by some other term than interested and disinterested. The seat of them all is indeed self. The gratification of them respectively affects self. But their direct tendency is to some particular object different from that pleasure at which self-love aims, as a general principle of action.

The source of the whole fallacy often lies in our notions of property, which implies a very close species of relation between the person and the object—a relation which is perhaps the most forcible to us of any—which certainly occurs to us the most frequently — and which, from the power we exercise over the object, has been resolved into the connecting principle of causation. Now property no doubt excludes others, and therefore an immoderate attachment to it, turning the mind towards the passion only, may be called selfish. But we must not, therefore, apply the term to every action, which concerns ourselves. The affection of self-love itself indeed is so far different from benevolence, as not to include it; and in the same manner it does not include many other affections as such, the love of pleasure, or of power, or fame. None of these in their turn necessarily exclude self-love and benevolence any further than as they do not include it, and each of them in particular circumstances may include both. But that, and that alone, is properly selfish, which, while it includes ourselves visibly and uniformly, excludes all other men. Property when di-

vided so far *changes* its nature. But the delight we have in the happiness of others retains its nature, though at the same time we have a delight in our own happiness.

If it be asked, why the idea of property intermixes itself so often in our reasonings about benevolence, we shall find that this confusion proceeds from circumstances, not in the affection itself, but in the external exercise of it. We often relieve another man's distress by giving him what is our own. Here again we are prone to consider that as general and necessary, which is only particular and occasional; for benevolence may be exercised without affording pecuniary relief, and pecuniary relief may be afforded without such diminutions of our fortune as may properly be called a loss, for enough yet remains to answer all the purposes which self-love as a general principle, or the love of wealth as a particular affection, may prompt us to pursue. One reflection, however, it is worth while to make upon the cause, by which the idea of property thrusts itself into the mind. An excessive attachment to money for the most part marks and constitutes a selfish character—not because we love that money for our own sakes, for this only denotes avarice—but because we will not part with it for the sake of others, and this does imply selfishness; and therefore the voluntary employment of that money for the benefit of our fellow creatures, is an action which, at first sight, appears the farthest removed from selfishness. Doubtless it shows also, not only that benevolence is different from selfishness, but

prevails in those cases, where selfishness would exert the strongest opposition.

Though our first pleasures arise from the ministry of the senses, they are afterwards transferred to the external materials which are qualified to furnish them. As we advance in life we find a strong competition for those materials, and that what one man acquires, another loses. Thus we obtain the notion of self-interest—a notion which is not applied merely to the propensity to pursue pleasure as the end of all action, but to the pursuit of our own ends in opposition to the ends of others. Now upon this principle we may adjust the meaning of terms, which in the present controversy have been strangely confounded. He that only pursues his own ends, is, in the first negative meaning of the word, disinterested, while there is no call upon him to regard other men—he that pursues the same ends not merely with a disregard, but an opposition to the ends of others, is interested. To delight in hating our neighbour is malignant—to delight in doing him good is benevolent; but neither action is so to be referred to ourselves, as to be called interested or disinterested, unless in doing evil or good, we mingle some direct regard to an interest of our own, which may be promoted by them, or in doing good we deliberately give up some interest for the interests of others. If we attend to that interest, so far as the malignant action is also selfish, the malignity is abated; and so far as the benevolent action is at the same time selfish, the benevolence is diminished. They who do good or harm for their own purposes, are doubtless selfish. But it should be remembered, that he also is

selfish who refuses to do good, or abstains from doing harm to promote his own purpose. I need not tell you that selfishness, as a common term, cannot include all the properties of these different and opposite actions, when we do pursue our own advantage, and when we do not pursue it. I have only to say that when we do pursue them in doing good or in doing harm to others, the action may be at once selfish, so as to lessen the proper demerit of malevolence and selfishness — so as to lessen the proper merit of benevolence. All our affections then, whether resentment, or benevolence, or the love of wealth, equally lead to action for their own gratification, and so far they have an equal respect to private happiness. But they cannot be called selfish, unless they are performed as means to some end at which self-love is aiming, with a positive view to its own good, and with deliberate exclusion of the good of others.

But farther—even the actions which remotely flow from self-love, may not be selfish; for self-love, I must again observe, is a general principle of action, the ultimate end of which is our own happiness. But the ultimate end upon which we have fixed when we reflect, must not be confounded with our ultimate point in view, when we are beginning to act; for the line of our pursuit, it has been well observed, runs to a greater length than imagination has room to contain, and some of the means immediately necessary to the ultimate end require our whole attention to compass them. That end, however, though it is not directly within our notice, communicates to the means a power of giving pleasure; and the means for that

reason, as well as from their correspondent to some particular action, are at present our motives. Now a man shall fix upon prudence or upon temperance, as necessary to the attainment of that ultimate happiness to which self-love is directed; but he in each particular instance of action intends only to be prudent and temperate; for the pleasure is transferred from the idea of the end to the idea of the means, so that an action, proceeding principally from self-love, is not therefore to be called selfish, because self, when we were performing it, had imperceptibly slid out of our view. There is, however, a very striking difference in the application of terms to benevolent actions; for the good of others, which is the object of the general principle, must be the object of every particular affection and exertion, and will fall under some name expressive of benevolence, such as the name of filial or parental affection, or of hospitality, or of friendshlp, or of compassion. Nay self-love itself may, as a more general principle, include benevolence, as a less general principle; for a man may be wisely and virtuously persuaded that by promoting the good of others he will most effectually promote his own. But satisfaction even *here* is translated from the end to the means, and when those means are employed, the mind has no other end in view than the good of our fellow creatures; and this end therefore will fix the quality and the name of the action itself. No man indeed can impartially and seriously reflect, without knowing that his own present and future happiness will be upon the whole seconded by his endeavours to forward the happiness of mankind.

But the efficacy of this reflection in strengthening the general principle of benevolence, and in facilitating particular exertions of it, will not expose him to the imputation of selfishness. One circumstance, and one only, can warrant the application of the term, if, in the moment of acting, he had his own good so far and so distinctly present to his mind as to make it a motive. But if the action was performed when that good was not present to his mind, it has all the essential properties of benevolence; those properties too are not altered, because a subsequent consciousness arises that he has promoted his own happiness by making others happy; and even the consciousness itself is not to be called selfish, because it was not a motive of action. We are pleased because we have relieved others; but we do not relieve them with an intention of being pleased, and if such an intention is ever formed, we have already seen that it will frustrate itself. Happily for the virtue and for the comfort of mankind, the abstract idea of self is not formed till the affections, which constitute it are grown to some strength; and as the frequent recurrence of it might obstruct our best actions, and pollute our noblest enjoyments, our benevolent affections, and even those which relate to the materials of our own immediate personal gratification, are so constituted, as to carry us into action without further reflection—without any distinct perception of ourselves—without any direction of the mind to the ultimate end, which, indeed, is seldom obtained, if we are for ever and ever solicitous about obtaining it.

Thus have I endeavoured to expose the improper, and to fix the proper use of many words which have been industriously confounded, in order to tarnish the lustre, and to debase the dignity of benevolence. I will add, however, a few plain observations, which may tend yet more fully to correct the mistakes of those persons who, supposing that the chief means of happiness are to be found in accumulating wealth, hastily conclude that the sole or the chief office of benevolence is to communicate that wealth. This virtue, be it remembered, employs, for the benefit of others, not our money only, but our time, our influence, our bodily labour, and our intellectual endowments. It counsels, it encourages, it warms, and even in mercy threatens; it instructs the unlearned, and endeavours to reclaim the vicious; it seeks out the lonely cottage, where drooping age and pining want are cheered at the sight of a comforter. Softly it binds up the aching wounds of him that has fallen among thieves, and embracing, like its heavenly teacher, the unjust as well as the just, it utters sweet words of consolation to those who are languishing in prison and appointed to die. It visits the fatherless and widow in their affliction, and, that we may spare virgin innocence the blushes and the pangs of being sacrificed to the indulgence of our appetites, it keeps us unspotted from the world. Where our own interests, indeed, are staked, it hopeth all things and endureth all things; it choaks all the rank and baleful seeds of envy and of revenge; it spreads open our arms to a successful rival, and quells the

rising storms of anger within our bosom, by teaching us to consider our enemies as offenders "who know not what they do." But when the interests of our fellow creatures are concerned, it gives a freer scope to the more stern as well as the more soft affections; it enters into the just resentments of others, and glows with indignation against fraud, against rapine, and against cruelty; it enters also into the gratitude of others, and looks with fond admiration upon all the congenial virtues of liberality, generosity, and public spirit. But where, among these various instances in which benevolence exerts itself—where, I would ask, can the keenest sagacity discern one slight trace of that selfishness, which is said most falsely, and most unaptly said, to skulk under all our loveliest affections, and to corrode the soundness even of our fairest actions?

There is one, and I believe but one relation more, in which benevolence may be considered, and in which it really is considered in the chapter of my text, I mean that high and momentous relation in which the love of man stands to the love of God—the love of man whom we have seen and can serve, to the love of God whom we have not seen and cannot serve—the love of man, which as a principle of action is always invigorated by our general and most abstract admiration and perception of goodness, to the love of God, towards whom the same perception carries up our thoughts, as to its proper object, and in whose perfections alone it finds the purest and most complete gratification. But in this instructive and interesting point of

view of the subject has already been most ably discussed by two very eminent writers, from the frequent perusal of whose works some of the remarks now laid before you were suggested to my mind—by whose reasonings those remarks are illustrated—and by whose authority they are to my feelings confirmed, and I had almost said, consecrated.

Upon the present occasion too it cannot be improper for me to remind you, that the duty of not living to ourselves, as connected with the duty of habitual devotion, has been most judiciously explained by a celebrated author who now resides among you, and who, amidst all his marked peculiarities, and all, which some intelligent and virtuous men have thought his dangerous tenets upon a few controversial subjects, yet deserves to be ranked amongst the brightest ornaments of his country, and of his age. But from this incidental mention of what he has written upon a topic somewhat similar to my own, I am impelled by a strong and sacred sense of duty, to go forward in recommending the perusal of these sermons to every man who now hears me, in whatever station he may be placed, and in whatever congregation he may usually worship. The views of the writer are coextensive with the magnitude and dignity of his subject, and therefore they are not fettered by any limitations from particular modes of theological doctrine, or particular forms of ecclesiastical discipline. Whether, indeed, I reflect upon the solidity of the matter, or upon the clearness of the style, I think myself justified in classing this book among

the happiest and most useful effusions of his very active and very enlightened mind. It carries along with it the brightest marks of a profound philosopher, a philanthropic citizen, and a pious Christian. I call no man truly wise who can read it without the consciousness of being yet wise—I call no man good, who reads it a second time without some efforts to make himself better—without feeling his spirit exalted by the love of God, and his heart melted and enlarged by the noblest sentiments of benevolence towards his fellow-creatures.

It forms no mean presumption in favour of that system, which represents benevolence as a distinct and primary affection, that it is maintained to be so by the enemies as well as by the friends of Christianity. Hence some of the general reasonings and some of the particular illustrations, which have been employed upon the subject are in Hume and in Butler, nearly the same. The former justly contends, that in separating benevolence from self-love, there is not only more correctness, but more simplicity, than in resolving the one into the other. He supposes with Butler, that we have appetites like hunger, which rest upon some external object as its end; and some passions like the love of power, which without any direct regard to interest, lead us to their respective objects and procure for us a pleasing sentiment. He contends that without an original propensity, we could neither receive the first pleasure, nor afterwards pursue the same pleasure from motives of self-love. The primary passion constitutes any object our good, and the secondary pas-

sion pursues it as a mean of good, because it was made so before; and in this manner he solves a very important difficulty. "From the original frame of our temper," says he," we feel a desire of another man's good, which by reason of that affection becomes our own good, and is afterwards pursued from the conjoined motives of benevolence and self-enjoyment." I admit the general fact, but must distinguish about the manner in which those motives operate. I have all along supposed such enjoyment to be inseparable from the immediate exercise of benevolence; and I contend that the pursuit of it from benevolence as a general principle does not subject us to the imputation of selfishness. I know that the sentiment of utility to ourselves will sometimes intermix in our actions, and that with meaner natures, it may be employed to stimulate a languid and barren sympathy. There is danger, however, lest by insisting upon it very frequently, we should bring, or at least seem to bring, the social affections too nearly within the confines of the selfish; and against this danger we shall guard most effectually by describing benevolence to be, what it really is, disinterested as a principle, though in some cases it may be attended by interested motives. Yet we ought not altogether to lose sight of the pleasure that attends benevolence even as a general principle; because the benevolent affections themselves are strong enough to operate without any view to that pleasure, or any desire of obtaining it. We should feed the hungry and clothe the naked from compassion only.

We shall not exercise compassion, as I said before, in order to be pleased. But we shall be pleased, because we have exercised compassion. The distant expectation of that pleasure, may, in the hour of cool reflection, be formed by rational self-love, as well as by benevolence. But the actual enjoyment of it, is a proof, not that benevolence as such is the same with self-love, but that in some circumstances the one may co-exist and co-operate with the other.

The arguments already adduced, in this and a former discourse, either to prove the existence of a principle of benevolence, or to correct both the verbal inaccuracies and speculative mistakes, by which it is confounded with selfishness, will, I trust, preserve you who now hear me against being discouraged from the exercise of it by the insidious artifices of sophistry, and the vicious ornaments of declamation. As to those general and popular topics, which are employed more directly to persuade men to be benevolent, I think them in this place altogether unnecessary. From the extended plan of your schools, the increasing number of those who are educated there, and the improved state of your resources, I am well convinced of your charitable disposition, and I flatter myself that in respect to your good intentions the language of praise rather than of admonition is required from a preacher. In the close therefore of this discourse I shall content myself with setting before you some considerations more immediately connected with that love of your neighbour which induces you

to shelter the innocence and to enlighten the ignorance of the children, who are admitted into your schools. Those considerations are chiefly founded on the peculiar circumstances of the place where you live, and may therefore merit your serious attention.

Wheresoever large masses of men are collected together, we must look for great variety of character. Out of the numbers who are born among you, a part must be expected to arrive almost at the last stages of depravity; and I need not add, that the expectation of meeting associates will increase those alarming confederacies of men, whom you despair almost of reforming, and whom you may endeavour, though without success, to disperse and banish from the town. That expectation will allure from his lonely haunts the rustic ruffian, who in his own village has few incitements to rapacity, or upon the first detection of his attempts to be rapacious, is marked out as a pestilential character. It invites from larger places those inveterate offenders, who are in dread of being discovered on the spot where they have long exercised their former villanies, or who, having no settled habitation, and perhaps no regular plan of dishonesty, rove to every town which presents the most numerous opportunities for plunder. Though encouragements to diligence are here offered to all, yet all have not the good sense and firmness to make use of them. But the dread of shame must ever be weakened where bad men may hope to screen themselves from observation, and the temptations to vice will be multiplied, when exam-

ple is at hand to stifle the scruples of the timorous and to mislead the steps of the unwary. Amidst the bustle of employment or the gaieties of amusement, which prevail in every large town, the various and tumultuous scenes that are for ever pressing upon the senses, dissipate serious reflection, and open many secret avenues by which vice finds access to the heart. The unforeseen events of one day, the corrupt conversation of one company, the heavy pressure of a debt, the wicked insinuations of a mistress, the unlucky cast of a die, may drive a young man into the paths of wickedness, where, mingling with associates who are lazy, perhaps from the want of employment, or desperate from loss of character, he may abandon himself to helpless and to hopeless ruin. He hears indeed of the gloom of a prison, the galling weight of chains, and the anguish and ignominy of a public execution. But the terrors impressed by objects which are distant in themselves, and known to him only by report, soon give way to the impulses of passion—to the cravings of hunger—to the solicitation of unlawful advantages? which he can at this moment seize, or to the turbulent or treacherous instigations of evil companions, by which he is every moment assailed. Whatever anxious wishes he may form to escape from infamy, or whatever efforts he may be disposed to make towards amendment, he finds them unobserved by those to whom all his former enormities, in all their aggravations, are already known — to those in whose minds he would in vain endeavour to quiet the suggestions of suspicion and

fear—and from whose mouths he may have been accustomed to hear only the bitter taunts of haughty and unrelenting scorn. Some have not leisure to inquire into his purposes of amendment; others cannot confide in the sincerity of his professions. But all remember the outrages into which he has plunged, and all are deterred from committing their property to his care. In this dreadful situation how is it likely that he will conduct himself? He cannot go forward without danger and without infamy. But he cannot go back with the hope of forgiveness and protection. One alternative only is in his own power, and to that one, however criminal, he will have recourse, from the rage of desperation —from distrust in those by whom he himself is not trusted—from hatred to those by whom he is not beloved. If, therefore, evil principles and evil habits have been once formed, they are very unlikely to be eradicated in a place so populous as this, where so many temptations for rushing into dishonesty are united with so many opportunities for escaping detection.

I confess myself in the number of those who think the public safety and public morals very imperfectly secured by the rigours of public justice. I know that the unsparing and undistinguishing extirpation of offenders has but little efficacy in the diminution of offences themselves; nor can I look without sorrow upon the glaring disproportion which, to the disgrace of our free and civilized country, hath so long subsisted between the malignity of crimes and the severity of punishment. Our selfish

affections, blind and unfeeling as they are, may be content with the infliction of that punishment; but our social affections, if they are sincere and consistent, will impel us to provide some efficacious method for the prevention of those crimes. For these reasons I ever have insisted with unusual ardour, and with unshaken firmness I ever shall insist upon the utility of charity schools, because, instruction is in them the best preservative against that profligacy which pain, disgrace, and the dread of death itself, can seldom remedy. As a member of the community I have not been wholly inattentive to the operations of law, and I find them very precarious, and very ineffectual. As a man who has long been employed in the arduous business of education, I am able to calculate its efficacy, and to pronounce from my knowledge of the human heart, that in very few instances the advantages of it are bestowed altogether in vain. It retards at least our progress towards vice, and it always facilitates our return to virtue.

The inhabitants of this place have been reproached, though I would hope undeservedly, for an eager and almost sanguinary spirit in dragging criminals to justice. But upon this occasion you deserve to be commended by every good citizen and by every benevolent Christian for your tender and solicitous care to prevent the commission of crimes. You will therefore permit me to say, that one very important part of the love of your neighbours is to cut off the occasions, for which you may hereafter be provoked to hate them; and as the education of

children is very conducive to this important end, you will not think it improper for me rather to insist upon the local evils which education averts, than upon the general advantages which it produces.

Another consideration which I would recommend to your notice, is the peculiar nature of the employments assigned to the poor; and which in this town have a sort of mechanical tendency to generate in them a bold, I had almost said, and an obdurate disposition. It is a well-known observation, that the daily occupations of men have a constant and almost irresistible effect upon their tempers; and it is also a striking circumstance, that the persons engaged in them are slightly attentive to the silent progress of that effect, or sorely offended at the bare mention of it. Now the objects which present themselves to the view of those who follow the employment of a country life, are upon the whole favourable to virtue. The same labours which preserve their health and exhilirates their spirits, tends by the mechanism of our nature, in some degree to soften the gloomy and ferocious passions. They are conversant among inferior animals, who, without fostering their pride, are obedient to their will; and in their attendance upon flocks and herds, they see the most playful or the most peacable dispositions which are implanted in the brute creation. The beautiful or the magnificent works of nature are spread before their senses in the verdure of the fields, in the harmony of the groves, in the rich treasures of the vegetable world, in the bright serenity

of the sky, and the glorious effulgence of the sun; and hence it is, that the ideas of innocence and simplicity are connected with the descriptions of a pastoral life. Those descriptions, however decorated by fiction and exaggeration, are yet founded upon real facts; and it is no refinement to say, that the beauties and the wonders of the creation will sometimes seize the attention of the most thoughtless, and impress even the most callous minds with sentiments of a very pleasing and improving kind. In those trades which require very constant, indeed, but not very intense exertions, the persons employed in them are distinguised by a lassitude and debility of mind, which is seldom rouzed to the perpetration of outrages in which there is much difficulty or much danger. But in this place men assume a sterner and a fiercer character. The noisome atmosphere which they breathe, the glowing furnaces before which they swelter, the squalid and unshapen objects which they see, the rugged materials which they handle, the massive instruments which they wield, the harsh and discordant sounds which they hear, are causes to which, from their intenseness and their frequency, every sagacious observer of human nature will assign effects of considerable magnitude and considerable extent. But if the severe and incessant toils to which they are subject give an air of uncommon vigour to all their faculties, that vigour, we may also remark, is accompanied by an uncommon violence in all their passions; and as they are engaged in the most heavy labours at the very instant the bodily frame is capable of sustaining them,

we must not be surprised upon finding that their vicious propensities break out at an earlier period, and rage with more uncontrolled fury. I am here stating to you some facts, the reality of which may easily be confirmed by your own observation; and the inference I draw from them is, that you are under more than an ordinary obligation to train up young persons to docility and gentleness of temper; and that you would do well to cherish this temper at a season when they have not yet experienced the unfavourable influence of those rougher labours, for which many of them are hereafter destined.

I enter now upon the last, but not the least important train of remarks, which I wished to lay before you. Upon the industrious, and I should be ashamed not to add the inventive spirit, which distinguishes this place,* every intelligent member of the community must look with approbation, and even with triumph. The success of your exertions has assumed an importance, which entitles you to the protection and favour of government, which has attracted the admiration of foreign countries, and turned towards you the attention of those profound and more meritorious writers, who investigate the causes, the progress, and the beneficial consequences of every art by which human ingenuity is exercised, and social life is adorned. In your own opulence you have received, and long may you continue to receive, the just and splendid rewards of your own perseverance, and your own skill. But that opulence, while it enables you to employ the time, and

* Birmingham.

to recompence the services of the humble and honest manufacturer, is attended by circumstances not very friendly to the morals of those, who have unfortunately deviated from the strait and plain road of virtue. To gain wealth is confessedly, and no doubt laudably, the predominant and characteristic spirit of a mercantile town. But it is a contagious spirit, and though in better minds it is an incentive to every curious contrivance, and every strenuous exertion, it becomes a snare to the ignorant and the unprincipled, and may involve them in guilt. They hear from almost every mouth, that money is the chief good—they see in every street the advantages which it procures—they feel their own want of it, and they are impelled to seize some portion, for the supply of that want, without employing any serious concern about the means of obtaining it. You are shocked, indeed, and exasperated at the arts by which they deceive, and the violence with which they wrong you. The vehemence too of your indignation is the more excusable, because the idle and the worthless here invade that property which you have yourselves accumulated by unwearied diligence, and unremitted care. But while you view their offences with a detestation which it ill becomes me to condemn, suffer me to state some considerations to which the unfeeling pride of wealth is too much a stranger, but to which common justice and common humanity will assign no mean degree of importance, when we are complaining of the ingratitude, or inveighing against the profligacy of the poor. The violations of pro-

mise, the encroachments upon property, the disregard to all the clear and salutary rules of justice, are not confined, you well know, to the lower orders of mankind.

They who are blessed with abundance, and who revel in luxury, are not always superior to the suggestions of avarice; nor always delicate in the choice of means, to gratify this ignoble and insatiable passion. They shrink not from the meanness of fraud and the cruelty of oppression; they will desert a friend and trample upon a foe, in situations where the advantages bear no proportion to the guilt which is incurred in usurping them. To heap one superfluity upon another—to gain the means of obtaining pleasures which they may never enjoy, or of which the enjoyment itself would be criminal—to build houses which they may never inhabit—to plant vineyards of which they may never gather the fruits—to surpass the acquisition of some successful rival—to attract the wonder of the gazing crowd—to amass treasures without end and without use—these are the purposes, the wretched purposes, for which men suffer themselves to be tempted to acts of dishonesty. And what men? Even they who have already experienced the kindness of Providence—they who have been taught to understand the most sacred obligations of virtue and religion—they who know the foul qualities, and can foresee the pernicious consequences of wickedness—they who profess to love God, and who would be offended if we imputed to them such a love of them-

selves as excludes the love of their neighbour. When such faults are to be found in such situations, must we be deaf to every plea of extenuation, and callous to every feeling of pity towards the poor—towards fellow-creatures who stand exposed to the wintry storm—who are driven on by the painful feelings of thirst and hunger—who are buffetted by the scorn of some superior, whom the accident of birth, or the kindness of a progenitor, has lifted above them, or who are unable to enjoy with moderation the very affluence which they have acquired by successful dishonesty? Let every man lay his hand upon his own heart, and pronounce himself happy, if he stands acquitted of having fallen into greater crimes with less temptation.

The natural shrewdness of the lower ranks, when sharpened by necessity, catches by a quick glance many defects which we, who stand at a distance, suppose unknown to them; and they institute too many comparisons in which their common sense determines them to condemn all the specious disguises, and all the artificial modifications, of those bad principles by which they are themselves more openly actuated. The degrading consciousness of their own inferiority, and the mortifying remembrance of their own guilt, will often point their inquiries towards other men, who, at less peril and with less infamy, commit equal if not worse offences. To plunder a part, and to its possessors scarcely a sensible part, of that abundance which has been unfairly acquired or is intemperately enjoyed, seems in their eyes almost venial, when they

intend to satisfy only the loud calls of necessity, or even to indulge those carnal appetites which their superiors do not control. They feel no very strong reluctance to snatch a portion of that happiness which is not imparted by those who possess, without to them appearing to deserve it. When they are not protected, they will defraud without hesitation—when they are insulted, they will injure without much compunction. The want of humanity in others becomes in their minds an excuse for the want of justice in themselves; and how shall we expect them to love that neighbour by whom, both in reality and in appearance, they are not themselves loved? When these dangerous notions break forth into action, it is very easy, and perhaps very proper, to bring down upon the head of the offender that perdition which he has defied. But it is scarcely less easy, and surely it is more proper, more beneficial to society, more consistent with religion, to prevent those notions from once getting possession of their minds—to infuse into them early principles of sobriety, diligence, and honesty—to make them connect the idea of a benefactor with that of an employer—and to let them see in every prosperous superior a wise, humane, and virtuous instructor.

Standing, as I do, in this sanctuary, I dare not dissemble any feelings, or any opinions which may lead you to show the love of your neighbour with real and lasting effect; and in order to give those feelings and those opinions that advantage to which their own inherent importance entitles them, I

will produce the words of a great writer, whose penetration into the human heart was almost unrivalled, whose regard to the best interests of virtue is indisputable, and whose philanthropy being united with wisdom never permitted him to give the smallest encouragement to the unprincipled and the ungrateful. "Such," said he, "are the temptations of poverty, and who is there that can say that he has not sometimes forsaken virtue upon weaker motives?" "Poverty," continues the same writer, "for the most part produces ignorance; and ignorance facilitates the attacks of temptation; for how shall he avoid the paths of vice who never was directed to the way of virtue? Let any man reflect upon the snares to which poverty exposes innocence, and remember how certainly one crime makes way for another, till all distinction of good and evil is obliterated, and he will easily discover the necessity of charity to preserve a great part of mankind from atrocious wickedness."

But to conclude. After trespassing so long upon your attention, I am compelled to pass over the advantageous effects of your charity, when considered in reference to the delicate sex of some of these children, and to the tender age of all—in reference to many admirable regulations which you have laid down for improving their morals and enlightening their understandings — in reference to the benefits which will hereafter result to yourselves from their virtuous education, benefits, I say, which rational self-interest will lead you to anticipate, and which

the purest benevolence will not forbid you to pursue. Let me, however, just point out the comparative excellence of this your labour of love. He who is fed by your bounty to-day, may to-morrow be compelled to hunger and to thirst again—he whom you have extricated from difficulty may again be suddenly and irretrievably plunged into it, by the unforeseen and unavoidable crosses of life — he to whom pecuniary succour is held out may abuse that succour by sloth or by intemperance, and, amidst the distractions of conscious guilt, may turn away with horror, even from the hand that relieved, and the eye that pitied him. Many, very many instances of liberality, produce only a partial and a transient effect. But the charity which you patronize is of a nobler kind; it will enable these little ones to procure for themselves those resources, which other men are compelled to seek by precarious and abject supplication. The influence of it extends from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age, from time to eternity. It acts not so much for the gratification of the animal appetites, as for the improvement of the understanding and the heart; it supplies, not merely a cup of water, which may soon be followed by faintness, nor a garment, which in a short time must wax old; but those firm and efficacious principles of industry, of prudence, of honesty, and of piety, which will never fail. Benevolence, thus exercised, is approved by all the tests to which virtue appeals, by the sense of propriety, the sense of utility, and the sense of recti-

tude. It will promote your own future as well as your present happiness ; it connects the amiableness of the social affections with the merit of religious obedience ; it entitles you to praise from the wise and good, for well-directed activity in the love of your neighbour, and for most unequivocal sincerity in your love of God.

# SERMON XLIII.*

FAITH AND MORALS.

## 1 Ep. John v. 4.

*Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.*

In extenuation of the hateful consequences imputed to enthusiasm, we have been told that the panegyrists of faith are not intentionally advocates for immorality, and that their contempt of good works is by no means irreconcileable with their abhorrence of bad. As to the second position, it is utterly incongruous to all the operations of the human mind, which either receives opposite impressions from opposite objects, or is suspended in such a middle state of indifference as often produces inaction, and always excludes perceptions so lively as contempt or abhorrence. The testimony of universal experience must not, therefore, be rashly sacrificed to the affirmations of men who are too prejudiced to investigate the tendency of their own sentiments, too infatuated to disown, or too interested to acknowledge it.

In respect to the first excuse, though plausibly

* 1772.

expressed, it may easily be answered. When the degradation of virtue is said to be blended with the defence of vice, I mean to charge these disputants with doing virtually what they must have renounced common sense, as well as common decency, to have done avowedly. Had they stood forth the open, undisguised apologists for actions that are alike condemned by our moral feelings and intellectual powers, mankind would have been instantly disgusted at the absurdity of such tenets, or shocked at their impiety. Admiration in the warmest of their adherents would have cooled into incredulity; the alarm given to fear would have awakened the judgment from its slumber; every understanding must have perceived the fallacy, and every tongue proclaimed it.

Most readily, therefore, will I acquit our opponents of such violence as would have defeated itself. But there is a wide gulph between this concession, and another far more agreeable to their wishes, and more honourable to their reputation. I allow that the dangers which hover over a practice in the system of those who exact faith, are more remote, but not on that account less real—are more indirect in their approach, but not less formidable in their ravages. The great motives of human action you know to be the desire of pleasure and the fear of pain; but as faith is pronounced to be not incompatible with habits that are supposed to incur pain, and as it disdains the aid of those to which pleasure is usually annexed, it will in some degree disperse the terrors of the wicked, and crush the hopes of

the righteous. In whatever intricacies the debate before us may be perplexed, certain it is that the same arguments which discourage virtue must ultimately encourage vice. By the uniform progress of our ideas, the hideousness of the one will always be diminished in a contrast with the diminished beauty of the other. According to every rule of justice, any deduction in the recompence of the former requires a proportionate mitigation in the punishment of the latter.

I am at a loss, then, to conceive what purpose can be answered to the enthusiast, or what discredit be brought on his opponents, if we admit the literal meaning of an apology so confidently urged. By pointing out the futility and incoherence of his tenets—by shewing the latitude which they opposed to the worst of men, and the mortifying confessions which, if well grounded, they must have wrung from the best, I might set before you, did the time allow, the consequences of every hypothesis that debases practical religion. To avow those consequences must indeed imply a radical perversion of the understanding, and a depravity of heart so monstrous and unnatural as neither to be paralleled or dreaded from the excess of its turpitude; but to overlook them argues a degree of dullness, or inaccuracy, which can scarce be forgiven in men who not only engage in the contest without provocation, but lay claim to the honour of victory. To deny without disproving them were matchless effrontery, and to stifle without disbelieving them the most flagitious insincerity. The gross improbability of the system

commonly received is, I know, too apt to escape observation, either from the distance to which its effects are industriously thrown from the reach of impartial inquiry, or the specious colours in which they are exhibited, in order to attract wonder and amuse superstition. Hence the disregard some men have conceived, and even ventured to express, for morality, is veiled by the title of humility; the venomous and illiberal invectives heaped upon its defenders, are consecrated by the name of zeal. A spirit of fearlessness, or rather of exultation under the consciousness of practices, which, however the precepts of Christ may have forbidden them, his blood will doubtless wipe away—such a spirit is called the perfection of faith—the most wonderful instance of its efficacy, and the most striking proof of its utility. By these wretched artifices the credulous are deluded, the profligate consoled, and every man is taught to expect the blessings of Heaven, under a restriction not to over-value right actions, and with a tacit permission to repeat such as are wrong.

Faith, we are told, will atone for our real infirmities; but as for our imaginary excellencies, they make us blind to the evidences of faith, insensible of its raptures, and unworthy of its rewards.

To the choice of my present subject I was led by a sense of its uncommon importance, and a dread of the baleful influence which the misconception of it must have on our integrity and our peace. In unfolding to you my own sentiments, I have made it my aim not to traduce persons, but to explain things—not to inflame your passions, but to con-

vince your judgments—to rescue the misguided from error—to rouse the thoughtless into vigilance, and deter the presumptuous from false security. Were the speculative doctrines of enthusiasm brought to the standard of Christianity — were we to judge of them by the airy refinements and incoherent jargon of the enthusiast, we might be induced to think him not less mistaken about the properties of belief than the merits of obedience. The same objects which, viewed in the true and steady light of Revelation, at once exercise amazement and impress conviction, are distorted from their just proportions, and swollen to an artificial bulk, in the systems of the fanatic;—as if the Deity had endowed us with faculties which it is unlawful to employ, he makes a boast of assenting to doctrines which shock common sense, clash with all the dictates of intuition, and confound all the principles of demonstration. But with the reasonable Christian examination precedes assent; the accuracy of that examination is always suited to the importance of the subject; and the degree of that assent to the probability of the evidence. He never calls hypocrisy to the support of ignorance, nor pretends to believe propositions, which he has in vain attempted to fathom. He neither denies with the sceptic what in itself is not entirely comprehended, nor adopts with the visionary what is indistinctly conceived, or totally unknown. He nicely observes the imperfections, and the capacities of the human mind. He distinguishes things which surpass, from those which contradict reason. He marks the exact

points, where probability warrants belief, and certainty interdicts it; and where the primary, fundamental, and inflexible rules of human knowledge authorise dissent. But the faith of the enthusiast —that faith, for which he is content to despise morality, and on which he builds a right to salvation, too often consists in repeating what is not understood, or acknowledging what he does not endeavour to understand.

In the careless undistinguishing admission of every doctrine which Christianity has been tortured to defend, no man can find his account, unless he be too lazy to examine scripture proofs, or too stupid to comprehend them. But implicit belief, whether it arise from incapacity or idleness, makes no part of religion. It exposes men to delusion upon topics, where it is their duty and their interest to obtain the most faithful and precise information. It disgraces Christianity, by infusing suspicions that the scriptures cannot endure the test of impartial scrutiny; and it seduces Christians to affront a God of infinite wisdom by offering to him the sacrifice of fools. Good works are the legitimate offspring of a rational belief; but an irrational beginning in credulity is not likely to terminate in virtue. The enthusiast indeed expects to propitiate the Almighty by the neglect rather than the exertion of his talents—by the ardour of admiration rather than the firmness of obedience—by gloomy meditations amidst the obscurities of mystery rather than serious attention to the clearest and most interesting truths. Equally destitute and ignorant of the faith that passes from the understand-

ing to the heart, he undervalues or denies such effects of it in others, as he has never experienced within himself.

In refuting the opinions of others, I have been obliged sometimes to reprove the obstinacy and uncharitableness that are interwoven with them; but surely, it is not the duty of a Christian teacher to harden obstinacy, to countenance uncharitableness, to dissemble consequences, because they exist—to spare the greater crime while he reproves the less—or, on the contrary, to abstain from the confutation of groundless notions, because they have been productive of criminal actions. Such prudence is folly—such lenity the very excess of cruelty.

That the patrons of faith assume a most offensive superiority over those who hold works essential to salvation, is an incontestible fact; but the steadiness of defence should be proportionate to the impetuosity of assault; and doubtless the cause of Christianity, maintained on the firm and manly principles of Protestantism, is not to be complimented away. The reputation of those, who have defended it by their writings and adorned it by their lives should not tamely be surrendered to the disposal of every dogmatical opinionatist, every stubborn bigot, or every audacious reviler.

With men, who are more desirous to accuse, than able to correct, it is not unusual to unite duplicity with malevolence—to hurl the fire-brands of sedition without any professed aim—and to scatter undistinguishing allegations, which they explain away, when drawn close by ill-nature, or even by good

sense to the case of particulars. These arts, however the persons who condescend to employ them may triumph in their own prudence, suggest no favorable opinion of their fortitude, or their justice. If some men do not teach the word of Christ, as it becomes them to do, let them be singled out for opposition, their arguments invalidated, their mistakes corrected, and their misrepresentations, if such they be, exposed; but the merits of the many ought not to be confounded with the faults of the few; nor should the suspicions, which justly fall upon imposture, be so far extended as to counteract truth. They who allow the reasonableness of these demands, yet elude their force by moulding their complaints into a different form. The truth, say they, is almost inevitably stifled by the oppression of error, and therefore one of our cautions is needless. The other is absolutely impertinent; for it is the many whom we deliberately blame, while our commendations are reserved for the few — the very few, who in this age of philosophic refinement on the one hand, or of ignorant supineness on the other, dare to inculcate evangelical doctrines, in evangelical language, and upon evangelical principles.

Here then the mask drops off, and this terrible accusation meets us in the face — by denying the all-sufficiency of faith, and contending for the necessity of works, you are traitors to your flocks, and apostates from your Saviour.

My brethren, the matter is now grown too serious to be hastily dismissed. In these unhappy days,

when men dare to disobey their God even on system, and licentiousness of opinion keeps pace with profligacy of manners, the peace of the community must be nearly connected with the credit of your spiritual teachers. Incapacity, carelessness, prevarication, are no light charges against men who are established under the protection of the laws, blessed with all the advantages of a liberal education, and appointed to the momentous office of instructing the unenlightened, and reclaiming the abandoned. But to what do they amount? That we do not discharge this office—that we have not reaped those advantages — that we merit not that protection — that we are incompetent and deceitful guides—that we neither tread in the path of salvation nor wish to find it—and voluntarily betray the Revelation which we have solemnly pledged ourselves to support.

Instead of retorting these invectives, be it our business to show the candid, the judicious, and dispassionate part of mankind, that they are unjust. If ignorance be objected to us, let us disarm the objection, by insisting on such doctrines as possess at once the perspicuity of reason, and the authority of revelation. If carelessness be alleged against us, let the allegation fall on a quarter from which it must recoil on the head of its defenceless authors—on our unwearied endeavours to sift every theological question severely—to strip it of foreign and unbecoming arguments—to detect sophisms, however subtle—to deduce inferences, however unexpected and unwelcome — to drag into light the lurking

mischiefs of error, when it demands unlimited confidence, under the imposing form of Scriptural simplicity—and to separate the dross of human inventions from the pure and genuine word of God.

He that draws the boundaries between faith and works, if he be not entitled to the gratitude, should be sheltered at least from the resentments, of all parties. The practical Christian will not be displeased at a train of reasoning, which demonstrates the stability of his hopes, and the rectitude of his habits. On the other hand, for those who despise morality to be offended at any seeming intimation of their defects in it would not be altogether consistent. If it be quite immeritorious, as they tell us it is, why should the want of it be deemed by them at least as a reproach—or to what end should they be anxious for it, as a recommendation before men, while they are conscious of its extreme vileness in the sight of God? On the contrary, if it possess any share of merit, what reason have they to resent expostulations, by which themselves may be extricated from the ignorance of delusion, and the misery of guilt? But error is seldom of a-piece. Whatsoever person, from the most upright intentions, and in the most proper manner, undertakes the reformation of the enthusiast, must bid defiance to unkind suspicions, to peevish cavils, and acrimonious slander. Prejudice is a stubborn weed, which yields only to perseverance; but as for that impatience of advice, that detestation of the adviser, which characterize the prejudiced, they constitute an experimental proof for the actual existence of

those evils, the prospect of which must have alarmed every sensible enquirer into the opinions whence they spring. They increase at once the difficulties of instruction, and the obligation for every honest man to encounter those difficulties. They are a melancholy indication that the disorder (we apprehend) has risen to a crisis, where lenitives must lose their use, and where to delay the application of efficacious medicines, because they are distasteful, would be inhumanity complicated with breach of trust.

The spurious faith some men would obtrude upon us, banishes morality from the sphere of Christian redemption, and, of course, opens a door to the most shameless and incorrigible wickedness. Let me now expostulate with those who have not advanced to this extravagance of absurdity—who allow reason some share in explaining the Gospel, and have not cast off all regard for practical religion. If you have searched the Scriptures, not to justify what you have done, but to discover what you ought to do, you must perceive what is repeatedly and positively asserted in them—the dignity of righteousness, and the meanness of sin. But what appearance of propriety do you preserve, or what proof do you give of sincerity, when the good which you commend, that you do not? and the evil which you condemn, that you do? Should any one applaud the justice and utility of human institutions, and plead this applause in vindication of transgressing, or even instead of observing them, such a plea might expose him to ridicule, but could not screen him

from punishment. As preposterously does that man act, who contents himself with confessing Christ, though he does not overcome the world—who admits the right of Almighty God to enforce obedience in the moment he has determined to disobey —and who arrogates to himself the privileges of a child, while he spurns from him the authority of the father, by whom they are conferred.

God, it must be owned, is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; his approbation must centre in qualities which are most similar to his own perfections; and his laws, it might be presumed, would open the widest sphere to those qualities. But if the Gospel be designed, not in fact to regulate our actions, but to draw from us confessions of its tendency to regulate them well, the most excellent rule of righteousness must become ultimately an incitement to the most daring iniquity. Had Christ's promises been annexed to faith disjoined from repentance—had they been indiscriminately lavished upon the good and bad—had no admonitions been given to the one, and no threats denounced against the other—had it been obscurely hinted to us, that essentially different as are the natures of virtue and vice, the practice of either is to us indifferent—our expectations of future felicity would not have been unreasonable. But the general import of the scriptures, and the frequent declarations of our blessed Master give no countenance to such hopes. He has proposed everlasting recompence, not to the outward shew of faith, but inward uprightness of intention—not to those who say Lord, Lord, but such as

do the will of their Father, which is in Heaven. Upon the same conditions, expressed in the same words, Christ has admitted us to the dear and honourable relation of brethren, sisters, and mothers. He has dignified with the appellation of his friends those who keep his commands. He has pronounced the most solemn benediction on the meek, the merciful, the poor in spirit, the pure in heart. Every act of benevolence to our fellow-creatures he will accept and repay as an act of regard towards himself.

In like manner, when St. Paul recommends faith, he neither plucks it asunder from hope, nor sets it on a level with charity. When he describes the whole armour of God, he joins the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit to the shield of faith. When he bids us put on the Lord Jesus, he forbids us to make provision for the lusts of the flesh. When he exhorts us to prove what is that perfect, acceptable will of God, the most unequivocal, illustrious proof, consists in our non-conformity to this world, and our transformation to the pursuits of a better.

Let not the advocates for morality be any longer charged with depreciating Scriptural evidence, or despising Scriptural expression. If those Scriptures are to be judged by the same laws of criticism which prevail in other compositions—if they be addressed to our faculties in their present constitution —if they be intended to inform rather than to guide —to resolve doubts rather than excite them, I may now demand the assent of every unprejudiced man to this declaration, that, in the foregoing passage, the

necessity of words is inculcated, their merit ascertained, and their reward proposed. Yet you may insist that exterior virtues are often ungenerous in their aim and imperfect in their performance—that we practise them under the mechanical impulse of constitution, or the sudden sallies of caprice — that we look forwards to temporal praise, or temporal profit.

So far as any of these circumstances enter into our action they debase its worth, and lessen its retribution. But while I allow the reality of the fact, and the fairness of the conclusion deduced from it, I must consider the introduction of both as altogether impertinent or insidious. The question before us turns upon the merit of works performed in compliance with Christ's injunctions, and in expectation of God's favour. Such works, I insist upon it, have a real, a proper, though a relative perfection. They are all that we can accomplish, and therefore all that God will exact. They include the terms upon which God has offered to us salvation, and necessarily establish our claim to it. Much of the darkness and uncertainty that have gathered round the subject of final acceptance, may be dispelled by distinctions so intelligible that the meanest capacity may grasp them—so determinate, that even the strongest cannot break their force—and at the same time so obvious, that no man could account for their being overlooked, did he not remember that the arts of controversy puzzle the most important truth, and the pride of controversy disdains such as are most plain. When the deity assigns rewards or

punishments to actions, we may conclude, from his attributes of equity and holiness, that such actions are respectively fit subjects for such appointments.

To what extent vice would be punished, or virtue rewarded, independently of a revealed law, were a question which, on the grounds of natural religion, it is impossible to settle, and which it is as absurd to discuss within the pale of the Gospel. Christianity, we know, has enlarged the scope of our moral agency, and enforced its sanctions. The same Christianity also assures us, that the wicked shall be eternally miserable, and the righteous eternally happy. If mercy had not come to the aid of justice, our sense of human imperfection informs us, that the rewards had been less glorious — our conviction of the Divine goodness may convince us, that if justice had not excluded mercy the punishment would have been less severe. Faith certainly did not obtain this dispensation in our favour, because the existence of every object must precede our assent, that it exists. It will not by its own unaided efficacy procure for us the advantages of that dispensation, since they are by express condition reserved for righteousness. Among Christians, therefore, the consideration of moral desert becomes complex; it includes the inherent merit of works antecedently to any covenant, and an extrinsic merit superinduced upon them by virtue of a particular covenant, under which indeed the works themselves are produced by purer motives, and performed with greater exactness. They are the works, not of men absolutely, but of men under the specific cha-

racter of Christians. They are the works not of frail and corrupt creatures only, but of creatures acting under a religious economy where frailty is to be assisted and corruption rectified.

This method of decision steers happily between the arrogance of popery, and the gloominess of Calvinism. It stands discharged from the heavy incumbrances of imputed righteousness, which as an expression applied to Christ is not warranted by scripture, and as a proposition applicable to any mediator can scarce be reconciled to reason. It is calculated at once to excite our gratitude and animate our obedience. It unites hope with humility—sincerity of belief with integrity of behaviour.

I think it beside the purpose of this discourse to enter into the dark and thorny subject of justification—into the different meanings in which the word is used—the different terms on which the thing itself is accomplished, and the different methods in which it is beneficial. But for the honour of the English Church, and to the confusion of those who boast themselves as its warmest advocates, I must not conceal from you that this Church has affirmed good-works to be the fruits of faith—to spring necessarily from a true and lively faith—to be acceptable to God and Christ. I hold, according to the open declaration of that Church, that they do not of themselves expiate sins; for that expiation is effected by the mercy of God, announced to us by Jesus Christ. I hold by fair consequences from the doctrines of the same, that they promote expiation not positively but indirectly—not as efficient, but conditional

causes—or, in more popular language, that unless works are performed, forgiveness will not be granted.

St. John speaks of faith as the instrument of the conquest over the world—as the spring which sets in motion our efforts to be virtuous—which quickens their vigour and directs their aim. In this position, the apostle has not done what his interpreters are prone to do; he has neither perplexed what is distinct, nor united what is irrelative. Faith, exercised on the evidences and laws of revealed religion, sets before you the beauty of holiness, the deformity of sin, the charms of God's mercy, and the terrors of his wrath. It lays open to us the excellence of heavenly joys, which we ought to pursue; the hollowness of earthly gratifications, which we ought to abandon; the severity of hell torments, which we ought to shun. It represents to you the various offices of Christ, and the relations severally resulting from them. If he be our teacher, we should be careful to follow his instructions. If he be our redeemer, we should be anxious not to forfeit our portion in the blessings of redemption. If he be our judge, we should be indefatigable to secure his approbation.

A Gospel thus circumstanced must be calculated to influence every part of our conduct — to convince the understanding—to engage the affections—and to regulate the will; but if that Gospel be reduced to a matter of private speculation, or public profession — if it only interests curiosity, sooths melancholy, or flatters pride, our assent to it may not be insincere — it cannot be meritorious — it

must, in some measure, be criminal. You will object, perhaps, "Is it possible for merit and guilt to inhere in the same subject—or is it proper for the sacred writers to condemn in one place what in another they extol?" I answer, no; but it is neither impossible nor improper for them to speak differently of an act marked by some fixed, well-known appellation, as that act be complicated with different circumstances, or applied to different ends. It is the distinctive property of a Christian faith to produce that assemblage of moral and religious qualifications which, in the emphatical and comprehensive style of Scripture, is called righteousness. Where these qualifications unite in one character, we shall discern a propriety in all the magnificent and accumulated commendations bestowed upon faith.

Here then let us attempt a short, but, I hope, an exact and satisfactory solution of the dispute so long agitated about the comparative value of faith and works. Faith, considered separately from works, is certainly inferior to them, because our wills, as I before observed to you, in the first case are passive, and in the next endowed with activity; and hence arises the distinction between intellectual and moral approbation — intellectual approbation always excluding choice, and moral always supposing it. But faith, considered in reference to works, and in conjunction with them, steps forward to the more honourable station, since, by a rule which pervades all existences in all modes, the cause must be prior to the effect, generally in order

of time, and invariably in order of dignity. Works without faith may have some little merit; but faith without works can have none. Works are exceedingly improved by faith, and faith is quite perfected by works. In this elevated point of view St. John speaks of faith in the words of my text, and in other parts of the Epistle whence it is taken. In chap. iii. 3. he mentions a good life as the genuine produce of a Christian belief, because every man that has hopes of seeing Christ (where hope presupposes faith) purifies himself even as he is pure. He insists upon it as the surest criterion of the Christian character, because whatever is born of God doth not commit sin. To guard against the misconstructions of those who usurp the honour of regeneration, and then exclude sin from works, which in the unregenerate are confessedly sinful, he tells us, that by the observance or neglect of righteousness the children of God and of the Devil are made manifest. Our Saviour has thus made some parts of our behaviour the sure signs of the principle from which the whole proceeds—"by their fruits you shall know them."

From these and other expressions, carefully weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, it appears that St. John speaks not of that faith, which is confined to a bare acknowledgment of Christ's mission, or abstruse researches into his doctrines. An effect so important as that of overcoming the world, calls upon us to trace out some higher cause; it leads us to that vital principle of religion, which gives proof of its energy in the performance of actions

intrinsically excellent—in the government of all vicious appetites—in forbearance from all unlawful enjoyments—and in a total subjection of ourselves and our concerns to the will of God. It was by this full strict correspondence between their words and their deeds, that St. John's followers distinguished themselves, and on this alone they grounded their pretensions to the prerogatives of the Gospel. But had they persisted in those practices, which the corruptions of Pagan morality had introduced, and the imperfections of Pagan philosophy did not disallow, these pretensions could not have been urged with any shadow of justice; they would only have convicted these deluded wretches of folly in the erroneous notions they had formed about a right to acceptance—of inconsistence in pretending to stand forth for the honour of Christ's religion, while they frustrated every purpose for which he established it—of perverseness because they were addicted to every pursuit that he had prohibited—and of ingratitude, because they eventually rejected every blessing that he had offered.

Let us bring home the Evangelist's precept to ourselves. Survey the conduct of those who name the name of Christ without overcoming the world, and then judge at what distance they stand from the duties, and therefore from the rewards of his Gospel. Some men amass riches or pant after the distinctions of power. Others give up their innocence and their tranquillity, a prey to the canker of discontent, and incur the guilt of loving the world without obtaining the satisfaction of enjoying it.

The attention of many is either dissipated in a giddy circle of trifling amusements, or strained in the pursuit of attainments where solid use is exchanged for splendid display, or unstrung, as it were, in a state of lazy, languid listlessness, equally irksome to themselves, and unprofitable to others. Yet more consume their lives amidst the riots of intemperance, the intrigues of seduction, and the outrages of debauchery, and heap crime upon crime without remorse for the past, and without preparation for the future. This wild harvest of follies and vices is to be found among those who profess at least to believe the Gospel, and who, when the prospect of another life breaks in on their worldly dreams form I know not how crude and hasty hopes of deriving I know not what advantages, from the interposition of a Redeemer. But will it be said, that this Redeemer has given any sanctions to their practices, or holds out any glimmerings of comfort, unless to those whom faith has led into the first dawnings of repentance, and repentance afterwards conducted to the meridian light of Christian hope? If you reply in the negative, it is the height of madness to appropriate the favour of God, while you continue to violate his commands. Will it be said, that men, who make duty bend to inclination, have true love for their Saviour, or reverence for their Creator? Can their interests be fixed in Heaven, while their affections are weighed down by the clogs of earthly pleasures; or have they, in any degree, attained that purity of thought, and that holiness of life, without which no man shall

see the Lord? The weakness of honouring religion by our mouths, while we disgrace it by our actions —the wickedness of claiming God's approbation without endeavouring to deserve it, are clearly shown in the reproofs that our blessed Saviour pointed against the hypocrisy and the pride of the Jews. This people boasted themselves the descendants of Abraham and the favourites of Jehovah, but their boasts were arrogant and vain, so long as they imitated not the patriarch's righteousness, and set at nought the commands of their God. They could not in strict propriety be said to know the master, whom they did not obey; or at least their knowledge of his will served only to aggravate the crime of transgressing it, and added insolence to impiety —perfidy to rebellion.

For the same reason, we Christians stand inexcusable in confessing the excellence of a law that we obstinately violate. We voluntarily earn the wages of unrighteousness, while we claim the privileges of virtue. We are enslaved by the shackles of worldly temptations when surrounded by every expedient that should make us free; and though eternal glory be the prize set before us, instead of exerting our resolute and re-iterated efforts to obtain it, we utter a few idle professions—we form a few unauthorized hopes, which answer no end but that of exposing our absurdity and our inconsistence —the deceit we put upon ourselves, and the horrid indignity we offer to our Judge. Do not imagine this description exaggerated. If the recollection of your own sins makes you afraid to think it true— if the secret corruptions of your heart would per-

suade you to think it false, reflect, I beseech you, reflect, before it is too late, on the only plea which such an offender can support on the last day.

Thus will he speak—I acknowledge that the blessed Jesus designed to further the salvation of mankind, and that his Gospel is admirably framed to effect it, by reforming their lives, if such reformation be necessary; but as the way that his moral precepts opened to happiness was tedious and painful, I struck aside into another path, whither my passions guided me, and my pleasures followed me. He commanded me, no doubt, to abstain from sensual gratifications, but I have wallowed in them —to renounce wealth, but I have grasped at it—to despise power, but I have thirsted for it. Yet I called myself a Son of God, and of course am entitled to all the privileges of that relation, even though I have fulfilled none of its conditions. I ever took my rank under the banners of Christ, though I have not sacrificed one interest or subdued one lust in his service. I have extolled without obeying his laws. I have admired without imitating his example. But for what purpose should I have engaged in these laborious works? I had risen to the towering heights of faith—of a faith unshaken and most unlimited. In consequence of that faith, I, who have willingly been a captive to the world, challenge a reward not less distinguished than falls to the share of other men, who have overcome it at the loss of all that is dear to flesh and blood.

My brethren, let your own consciences determine how far such pretensions can avail before the just and awful tribunal of Jesus Christ.

# SERMON XLIV.

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## 1 JOHN v. 4.

*Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.*

IN a discourse lately delivered before you on these words, I endeavoured to show the insufficiency of a partial obedience to make us the sons of God. The present will be employed in exposing the folly and inutility of belief merely professional. By a familiar mode of writing, which strengthens his language without entangling his ideas, the Evangelist you may observe, has linked together the instrument with the effect—the exercise of faith with the conquest of the world. Hence the import of my text has been strangely misrepresented by those, who prefer the glimmering of mysticism to the solidity and plainness of truth—by those who consult the Scriptures not to rectify, but to defend their favourite tenets—by those who one moment tear asunder belief from practice, and the next crowd them together confusedly, and who imagine that the defects of the one will be amply supplied by the abundance of the other. Such men are told that to overcome

the world requires faith, and then dream that faith necessarily, and by implication, overcomes the world: but they argue that a genuine faith includes a virtuous life, and frequently act as if their own faith would be accepted in the stead of it.

Could they, who dogmatize on sacred subjects peremptorily, be persuaded to examine them carefully, we might soon bring to an issue those unhappy disputes about the doctrines of Christianity, which, though started perhaps with honest intentions, have yet been carried on with a most unchristian temper. As no party, however, would be shameless enough to decline openly the equitable condition, it may be prudent to draw some lines of distinction before we proceed. By examination then, I do not mean the rapid effusion of Scriptural phrases, which it is far easier to accumulate than to connect—which those who display them most ostentatiously, do not always explain them most intelligibly—and in the repetition of which it is possible for the understanding to slumber, while the memory is exercised, and the fancy captivated. But in the investigation of doctrines on which eternity is suspended, it is necessary to trace every word through its significations, whether primary or subordinate, common or appropriate—to analyze every sentence into its component parts—to mark the connection of those parts to each other, and the relation of the whole to preceding or subsequent passages—to account for local and temporary circumstances—to bear in mind on what occasion any doctrine is introduced, and to what persons it is addressed—to deter-

mine ambiguous texts by such as are more definite—the obscure by such as are plain—to support general doctrines by particular proofs, not with the licentiousness of arbitrary assumption, but the calmness and precision of elaborate induction—not to be staggered by accidental difficulties, the solution of which progressive knowledge or persevering industry may supply—never to be seduced by indirect or partial expressions into a desertion of those leading, indisputable truths on which Revelation is known to hinge. To accomplish this labour demands some accuracy of judgment, and some extent of erudition; but without erudition and judgment, who shall presume to usurp a right of decision on controverted points? Or what excuse shall be alleged for the precipitancy and uncharitableness of those, who want these qualifications, when others, who possess them eminently, still think themselves obliged to inquire with caution, to determine with humility, and dissent with candour?

In a debate about faith and works, it is by no means superfluous to preserve you against the artifices of persons, who endeavour to overwhelm all rational theology in a chaos of impertinent, indigested, discordant quotations, countless indeed in number as the sands on the shore, and like them too, lumpish in the mass, and light after separation. Of a different and more genuine stamp are the Scriptural tenets of such teachers as hold it profaneness to apply the word of God rashly, and weakness or hypocrisy to search it superficially. They know that neither the examples of the best writers, nor the severest rules of criticism, forbid a

more relaxed and more confined use of the same word; and that in the application of these rules few difficulties arise to stagger any inquirer, whose mind is not warped by prepossession, nor darkened by superstition. Faith bears sometimes a simple, and sometimes a complex signification—it denotes assent to abstract propositions, and a scheme of conduct correspondent to such assent. In the former case our wills are generally passive, and the utmost merit that we can assume is of a kind altogether negative. In the latter our best powers are exerted for the best purposes; inclination follows the dictates of conscience, while conscience is guided by wisdom that cannot err. All faith may be resolved into a dependance on the veracity and goodness of the Supreme Being; yet the uniformity of its nature by no means excludes a diversity in its operations. They relate to the past and to the future—to the history of Christ's life and mission, or the revelation of God's will and promises. Faith, therefore, according to the difference of its subjects, operates by anticipation or reflection, and on every subject immediately or remotely leads to practice. It inspires us with gratitude by the representation of what Christ has done and suffered, with hope from the prospect of the recompence that he has offered, and with alacrity in performing the commands he has imposed.

That such are the properties of Scriptural faith might easily be demonstrated, either by an extensive search into the great scope of the whole Christian dispensation, or an exact comparison of its various yet connected parts. The Gospel,

I will be bold to say, ascribes merit to faith considered not absolutely, but relatively—not in its capacities, but its energies—not as a single independent act, but a principle which pervades a series of many actions—not as a principle constituent, but casual—not as a cause mechanically, but morally efficient—in short, not only as convincing the judgment, but sanctifying the heart. Formed upon this model, our belief, instead of being detached from our moral habits, becomes united to them—so united indeed as to evince their sincerity, promote their efficacy, and secure their continuance. Possessed of these qualifications, it borrows no aid from affected humility, or from real credulity—it enjoins no artifices of self-deceit, no force to reason, no abject, cowardly resignation of those intellectual powers, without which the light of the Gospel must be to us as darkness, its evidences unascertained, its precepts unknown, its advantages unattainable. It demands no sacrifice but that of our prejudices and our lusts. It acts upon us as beings who judge, who feel, and who determine; and it directs each of these faculties to their proper end. In a word, it begins in sound sense, and terminates in right behaviour. Of faith thus advanced to its just perfection—of regeneration not instantaneously accomplished by some unintelligible magic charm, but gradually proceeding from improvement in our minds to amendment in our lives, the sacred writers have spoken in a language too solemn to be trifled with, too decisive to be explained away. We are furnished to good works; we are the workman-

ship of God created in Jesus Christ to good works; and by good works is faith made perfect.

To rescue St. John's words from the perverse sense to which they have been wrested, is the design of these general remarks. They have also a farther use, and, without impropriety, usher in a more direct and formal confutation of their mistakes, who would exempt themselves from the ignominy of sin, or rather who lay claim to the highest rewards of righteousness only, because they acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world. With these mistakes it is the duty of every Christian teacher to grapple, because they cherish pharisaical pride, and pharisaical malignity—blunt the edge of every social feeling—extinguish whatever deserves the name of a Christian spirit—and contract the favours of an infinitely wise God to the narrow circle of one misguided, conceited, headstrong party. But in the soil where these rank weeds shoot up with wild luxuriance, we may discern a total barrenness of all the fruits, which the seeds of Christianity, taking root in an honest and good heart, are accustomed to produce—a devotion warm, yet rational—a generous and enlarged philanthropy—temperance without austerity—faith without credulity—and hope without presumption.

For those who avowedly undervalue practice, to be offended at any impeachment of their own defects in it, is highly unbecoming. If it be utterly insignificant, as they tell us it is, why should the want of it be looked upon as a reproach, or why should they be anxious for it as a recommendation to men,

while they are conscious of its vileness in the sight of God? On the other hand, if it be in any degree meritorious, what reason have they to despise or resent those expostulations, which are designed to rescue them from the pain and disgrace of guilt? But error is never of a piece. Whoever, from the purest motives, and in the most candid manner, undertakes the reformation of enthusiasts, must bid defiance to uncharitable suspicions, to peevish cavils, and acrimonious invectives. This impatience of advice joined to the hatred of those who advise, constitute an experimental proof for the actual existence of those evils, the antecedent probability of which may be established by abstract reasoning. They increase at once the difficulties of instruction, and the obligation for every faithful instructor to encounter them. They are melancholy indications that the disorder we lament has been inflamed to a height where lenitives must lose their force; and to delay the application of efficacious medicines because they are distasteful, were inhumanity complicated with breach of trust.

Many apologies have no doubt been urged in extenuation of the odium which religious errors, when pursued through all the labyrinths of studied or ignorant misrepresentation to their probable consequences, must incur. It has been often urged, that they who exalt faith do not invariably neglect practice—that in points of morality some of them stand on a level at least with those by whom they are traduced—that their regularity is exemplary, and their benevolence diffusive. The reality

of such exceptions I will not dispute; wherever they are to be found my hearty respect shall attend them, and most sincerely would I congratulate every accession to their number. Yet on an impartial, attentive scrutiny, I am obliged to look upon them as triumphs of nature over prejudice—as invincible arguments for the inefficiency and unsoundness of those sentiments with which they are unfortunately associated—as honourable instances of self-contradiction, where consistence would imply a total depravation of heart as well as understanding. Of the checks which feeling gives to the rash sallies of fancy—to the haughty stubbornness of arrogant or systematic obstinacy, the history of mankind furnishes many proofs. The patrons of an admired sect maintained the equality of crimes; and amongst the advocates for a modern religion it is an established maxim that heresy cancels all obligations to justice and humanity, supersedes all rights, whether natural or civil, and that we do service both to God and Christ, by the undistinguishing extirpation of those whom God has created and Christ redeemed. Yet we never hear that the Stoic inflicted punishment with equal severity on the parricide and the thief; and, in our own times, many who would strain every nerve to oppose the advancement of Protestantism, shudder at the thought of staining their hands with Protestant blood. The plain fact is this, God, to whom all our infirmities lie open, has graciously implanted in us many secret instincts, which counteract the impetuosity of passion, and the blindness of error, and alleviate the

mischiefs they cannot prevent. Hence the attractions of virtue operate upon us imperceptibly. We are sometimes snatched from guilt without perceiving the means of our escape, and sometimes our sensibilities shrink from the commission of those deeds which, seen at a distance, lose their deformity, or viewed perhaps through the false mediums of prepossession, assume an appearance even of merit. Be it remembered however, that such virtue, instead of resting on the broad foundation of principle, derives only a precarious, occasional support from feeling—that its influence therefore must be scanty and accidental—and that even for this influence we are indebted to restraints to which we yield reluctantly, and from which it is our constant though happily ineffectual labour to break away.

The generality of Christians have hitherto rested with entire satisfaction on the rectitude of all determinations, which are warranted by the moral sense when under the guidance of reason and revelation. The least violation of this faculty in compliance with all or any of the other mental powers, is the source of self-condemnation. The greatest violation of those powers in obedience to this faculty, has been attended with proportionate comfort. Such have been the reasonings of men justly eminent for their knowledge and piety; but enthusiasts in the excess of their infatuation have thrown down all distinctions—they cast away the gaudy trappings of works as sullying the purity of faith—they measure their progress in imaginary religion by their defects in real

morality, and in contempt of St. Paul's prohibition rush upon sin that grace may abound.

You will not, I hope, think my time mis-spent in laying bare the wickedness of apologies, on which so much stress is frequently laid. Habits of thinking more or less produce in the end correspondent habits of acting. Where error predominates, the judgment must often misguide the will, and the same zeal, the same sincerity, which do honour to a good cause, serve but to perpetuate and to multiply the mischiefs of a bad one. In estimating therefore the danger of any opinions, we should attend to their obvious tendency. The conviction which is built upon such proof is not to be shaken by the intervention of collateral, adventitious causes. If this rule be just, we may securely pronounce all such doctrines contradictory to Scripture as depreciate the dignity of morality, cast a damp upon our admiration of its intrinsic worth, and spread a languor of feebleness on our endeavours to observe it. To fix boundaries to the extravagances of enthusiasm is indeed impracticable. Examples are not wanting, where virtue has not only been stripped of its honours but branded with infamy—where indifference has led the way to deliberate, invincible aversion—and where every attempt to become perfect, as our Heavenly Father, has been misconstrued into a glaring proof of imperfection—into an act of folly combined with impiety. This, no doubt, is the last and most dreadful state of delusion; and the bare mention of it is sufficient to chill every honest

mind with horror. But in pointing out the fatal effect of the notions I am now combating, it is unnecessary to suppose them carried to such shocking extremes. If they do not actually excite an abhorrence of right, they tend at least to encourage the practice of wrong—to inflame the imagination with phantoms of self-importance, and to lull the conscience by the enchanting promise of security to the most abandoned of mankind. Should the boldness of this declaration startle you, recollect that it is not I who fasten these alarming effects upon error, but that the effects themselves cleave to it almost inseparably.

According to the usual method of stating the account between faith and works, no man of corrupt disposition can hesitate in his choice. Selfishness would for once side with religion, and fix the preference to that task which involves the fewest difficulties, and at the same time proposes the amplest rewards. If there be no merit in the performance of these works, which by the supposition are improperly styled good, the transition is neither long nor rugged to this inference, that in the omission of them is no demerit. To what purpose then does the Christian struggle with appetite, or abstain from gratification? Regeneration has exalted him above the defilements of iniquity—it separates lewdness from his pleasure, and cruelty from his revenge—it leaves him at large to wanton in the luxuries of wealth, and the pageantry of power—it reconciles seeming contradictions—accomplishes what the vain defenders of morality have declared to be

impossibilities, and makes the conquest of the world not incompatible with the most unlimited enjoyment of all that the world can afford.

Where deductions of this kind may be fairly charged upon any hypothesis, avowed libertines, who have no reverence for virtue, no hopes of salvation, must naturally wish the premises to be true. But that any reasonable creature should seriously think them so is wonderful—it is wonderful that advocates for them should be found among those who acknowledge the authenticity of the Gospel—who pretend to an uncommon zeal for its honour, and set up as it were an exclusive right to the knowledge of its doctrines. Could they, however, for once stoop to employ that reason, which those who possess it most scantily are apt most industriously to vilify, we might challenge them to try its strength on the following positions. Whatever perplexities may have arisen about the essence of obligation, whether it be derived from the means of acting or the ends for which we act—whether it depend upon the final acquisition of happiness, or be involved in the frame and texture of those actions to which happiness is annexed, all parties seem agreed in one point, that right and obligation are coincident. But if morality neither imply desert nor confer happiness, it is deprived of every quality that enters into our ideas of obligation—it is neither a part nor an adjunct, and of course contains no portion of its energy. Again, were morality connected with revelation, it must inevitably oblige, because revelation is throughout dictated by one common wisdom,

and enforced by one common authority; but our opponents insist that works are not the subjects in which religious duty enters. By my first position, therefore, they cannot oblige; and by my second, after being permitted to hold an inferior rank in the scheme of redemption, they must now be utterly excluded from the least relation to it. We have at last fixed on a criterion for detecting the fallacy of all the evasive, desultory, jarring, irreconcileable expedients to which those who dissent from us are reduced. In adjusting the value of works, there is room for few alternatives. They avail much in procuring the approbation of Almighty God, or they avail not at all. They may be neglected without any hazard, or must be observed with great advantage. They are quite superfluous, or quite indispensible. In order to escape the infamy that must attend an avowed extirpation of morality, the patrons of faith have had recourse to concessions that prove too much, or prove nothing to subterfuge, which an honourable cause disdains—by which a precarious one cannot be long supported—and from which nothing can be gathered but that such as employ them have neither the ability to defend their system, nor the honesty to renounce it.

Works, we are told, may be in some measure praise-worthy, but we must not think ourselves authorized to hope for that praise from our own works. What then? Is the Almighty a respecter of persons, and does he neglect, when actually done, what he antecedently approves because fitting to be done? Is his love of virtue confined to its abstract

existence amidst the eternal reasons of things, or is the contemplation of it, when produced into act exercised only in the immensity of his own perfections? Among his creatures, is it an offence to the God of truth to consider things as they really are—to consider them as he has ordained them to be in his works—to consider them as he has declared them to be in his word? Is the desire of applause in itself a ground for condemnation? Is it impiety for them to fulfil the conditions of those favours, which God has covenanted to bestow? Moral sentiments must presuppose a knowledge of good and evil; and why should the conscience of a right choice be excluded from pleasure, when the recollection of a wrong one is allowed to give pain? Faith itself, in the opinion of its admirers, is most praise-worthy; and they are seldom found too diffident in the expectation of its recompence, or apprehensive that to appropriate such recompence is in fact to forfeit it. Others again tell us that morality conduces to our earthly welfare only; but enthusiasm is here unluckily betrayed into an alliance with infidelity. Among the free-thinkers of ancient and modern times, it is a favourite maxim, that utility is the rule of right. To this visionary, but comfortless and most pernicious doctrine, the internal constitution, and the mutual relation of things, all the dictates of natural religion, and all the sanctions of revealed, have too often been opposed in vain. I will not, however, dissemble one circumstance which distinguishes the infidel from the enthusiast. The infidel maintains the temporal advan-

tages of what he calls morality as an encouragement to individuals, and a security to the community, in the absence of a providence and future state. He is therefore only erroneous. The enthusiast, while he admits both a providence and a future, yet adopts the same opinions about the rule of right into which the infidel is driven by the denial of both. He therefore is inconsistent as well as erroneous.

Let us search the fact itself. If felicity be here the product of virtue, analogy surely justifies us in looking forward to a similar dispensation hereafter. If the good things are to be added to those who seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, they are a pledge that nobler blessings are in store. And hence the seeming irregularities of the moral world are accounted for, because a probationary state, so far from requiring, does not even admit, plenary and adequate retribution. Whether good men are happy on this side the grave or the other, our Saviour's promise implies reward; but the word *addition* seems to intimate that future happiness is the proper supreme reward of righteousness, and present happiness, but the secondary and improper. As to the latter, the Deity may, for wise purposes, and often does, withhold it; but the very act of withholding it consequently establishes our right to the former, by bringing to the test our submission to the appointments of God, and our trust in his mercy. On the other hand, let us for a moment allow the enthusiast's assertion, that virtue, if it has any, only can have a temporal recom-

pence, to be well grounded; and imagine to yourselves a Christian renouncing pleasure, wealth, and power, in order to preserve his integrity. What is the result? He has done a work by the omission of which something must have been gained, and by the performance of which he is cut off from all possibility of obtaining an equivalent, either now or in future. Faith, indeed, may secure him a reward; but that faith is neither diminished nor increased by a mistaken effort of duty on the side of morality. If the improbability of their assertion be thus palpable in an imaginary case, let us bring it to the standard of one that is real.

The Apostles will be saved, because they believed in Christ; but all which they performed or endured in consequence of this belief—their unwearied industry—their unshaken fortitude—their renunciation of every advantage—and their defiance of every hardship certainly did not meet with any recompence on earth, and as certainly will meet with none in heaven. If the recital of these deductions borders upon blasphemy, shall it be said that the opinions which lead to them are calculated to promote the honour of God's attributes, and the interests of Christ's religion? Whenever, and by whomsoever this be said, the assertion is groundless, and I am at a loss to determine whether it most deserves contempt or abhorrence.

After baffling the attempt of enthusiasts to puzzle the question—after showing that the degradation of morality paves the way for its total exclusion, I must again bring forward, what some

men are extremely studious to keep out of sight—the effects of that exclusion, and the languid, distorted, ghastly form of religion, as they present it to our piety—shall I say?—or our indignation? As works are not necessary to a Christian, I shall not scruple to pronounce the faith, for which they contend, a cheap and lazy service, and reconcileable not only to the neglect of all that Christ seems to enjoin, but the perpetration of all that he seems to forbid. It is a victory, not indeed of the spirit over the flesh, but of imagination over reason. It is a yoke, not to our passions, but our understanding. It is a burthen most destructive of that glorious liberty, into which the sons of God was redeemed from the tyranny of sin.

So intricate and illusory are the wanderings of the human mind, that opinions, which in their first movements diverged from truth in opposite directions at their extremities, often meet in one point. To the panegyrists of faith it may be a matter of surprise to hear, that in debasing works, commonly denominated virtuous, they are not entitled to the praise of singularity. It may humble their pride to be informed that Hume, their fellow-labourer in the same task, is distinguished by zeal not less ardent than their own. They would do well to consider, that their associate, after attempting to pluck down the whole fabric of Christianity, has proceeded to undermine and shake the very basis of natural religion itself. This hardy champion of Atheism has, like the enthusiast, rudely driven out reason from its province of judging on the merit and demerit of

works; he has pointed his severest raillery against divines, who, under the disguise of philosophers, treat morals as enforced by the sanctions of reward and punishment; and he boldly explodes every theory that is grounded in the difference between actions voluntary and involuntary. In pursuing this parallel, I am not conscious of exaggerated, or invidious representation; but if the application be just, the system I am opposing certainly revolts common sense — strikes at the root of good morals — sets scripture at variance with scripture—and swarms with tenets far more mysterious than all the factitious mysteries which its patrons affect to adore. Will they persist in boasting that their theory exalts the Gospel? I deny the fact, and insist that were that theory countenanced by the sacred writers in the degree that is pretended, instead of reconciling Deists to Christianity, it would compel all reasonable Christians to take refuge in Deism—I say to take refuge, because no man can embrace such a revelation without doing what his nature and his religion now forbid him to do—without calling sweet bitter, and bitter sweet—without turning aside from the purest light, and plunging into the utmost darkness.

The disciples of the blessed Jesus have indeed, on some occasions, asserted their superiority over the teachers of philosophy. The former have submitted to the direction of a law, which they thought in all momentous points unequivocal, intelligible, and obligatory. The latter, with whatever ingenuity they might sometimes paint virtue, were yet unsteady in their notions, and in their practice seldom consistent.

But the accusation may justly be retorted, if the Gospel was intended only as a rule of thinking—if it transformed the promise of eternal life, from the more arduous to the easier task—if it recommended virtue without preparing a reward adequate to the labour of following it, and forbade vice without inflicting punishment on the vicious. But however noisy be the clamour, and however specious the sophisms of fanatics, let not the Christian be in haste to quit that advantageous ground, which he has long considered as his own. As reason must have obliged the philosopher to reject a religion teeming with such absurdities, the divine wisdom can never make it an object of our assent, much less the instrument of our salvation.

To conclude. The aim of this discourse is to set before you the disgrace that must overtake religion, and the enormities that would prevail in the lives of its professors, were the all-sufficiency of faith universally believed. At the same time I openly disavow the authority of a rule under which disputants often find a shelter for their disingenuousness or their perverseness—I mean, that men are not always responsible for the consequences of their hypotheses. For accidental consequences they undoubtedly are not accountable; but for such as are probable or necessary they are and ought to be so. This distinction is, I am sure, daily admitted in the transactions of common life; and religion, which belongs to the important concerns of another, will not, I hope, be made the only subject on which we have the privilege to wanton in paradox without

opposition, and without rebuke—to alarm the more credulous part of mankind—to stagger the judicious—and unhinge the sincere. When conclusions may be disproved, we have no right to expect the assent of those who differ from us—when they are established, it is rashness in them to refuse attention—to stifle conviction is obstinacy—and to act against it the most atrocious wickedness.

On a future occasion I shall more largely expostulate with those who allow reason a little share in explaining revelation, and who, while they expect to be saved through faith alone, retain some degree of reverence for practical religion, some charity for its well-meaning, though mistaken advocates. In the mean time let me persuade the consistent Christian to preserve his innocence and his tranquillity. The life of Christ was no doubt conformable to the will of God. He then who imitates the one, in fact performs the other. And on this supposition, Faith must be the grouud of practice. Christianity, says an illustrious Father of the Church, is the imitation of the divine nature. Of that nature you all know the characteristic and most important attribute to be goodness, from which activity and wisdom cannot be separated even in idea. If you square your conduct by this exact yet comprehensive definition, you may not be entirely sheltered from the contempt of the ignorant, the intemperate, and the intolerant; but your understandings and your consciences will bear you up against the unmerited censure of mankind. When you have done all that you could do to be saved,

when you have made our Saviour's reply to the lawyer's question the rule of your life, and have joined the love of God to that of your neighbour, they will give you the firmest assurance of approbation from the Redeemer, who has both instructed us by his precepts, and encouraged us by his example to overcome the world.

# SERMON XLV.*

JUBILEE SERMON.

## 1 Timothy ii. 1, 2.

*I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: for Kings, and for all that are in authority.*

The duties inculcated in my text are founded on the principles of general benevolence, and to me they appear more conformable to its real spirit, and more conducive to its proper ends, than systems which have recently been decked out in the gaudiest embellishments of eloquence, and have unfortunately seduced the judgments of shallow or restless men, under the imposing title of universal philanthropy. Misinterpreting and misapplying the restraints which Moses had laid on their forefathers in the infancy of their polity, and which were meant to preserve them from the contagious idolatry and barbarism of surrounding nations, the Jews, inflamed by pride, and beguiled by superstition, were accustomed to confine their social affections to those only who belonged to the same country, and professed the same religion. But Christianity takes larger and more correct views of our duty—it directs

* Oct. 29, 1807.

us to employ intercessions, prayers, and giving of thanks for all men. It is accommodated to our real situation, because all men, whether high or low, rich or poor, may in some degree influence our happiness; and because it is scarcely possible to affix any boundaries to the effects which our own agency may nearly or remotely have upon their well-being. From all men we may experience kindness—we may show it to all men; and, consequently, whether we confer or we receive, we should give thanks unto God. All men have wants to be supplied—have sorrows to be alleviated—have passions to be controled—have sins to be forgiven; and as Providence alone can determine at what seasons, and by what means these purposes are to be accomplished, we are required to offer up prayers for all men—more especially are we called upon to do so for kings, and those who are in authority.

Now, the Apostle, who had occasion to convey many other instructions to the church of Ephesus, over which Timothy presided, makes particular mention of praying for kings; and it may be right, therefore, for me to explain some local and temporary circumstances, which in all probability induced the Apostle to assign to this office of intercession for Sovereigns so early and so distinguished a place in the catalogue of his exhortations.

In former times the Jews occasionally prayed even for the Heathen princes who held them in captivity. Hence, when Darius, in giving effect to a previous decree of Cyrus, had issued an ordinance for advancing the building of the temple, he commands

that the Jews should "offer up sacrifices of sweet savour unto the God of Heaven, and pray for the life of the King and his sons." He rests this command not so much upon his power, as upon his munificence, and it was obeyed. (Ezra, vi. 10.)—Again, when the Jews residing in Babylon had sent a book writtten by Baruch to their brethren dwelling in Jerusalem, they give this excellent counsel: "Pray for the life of Nabuchodonosor, King of Babylon, and for the life of Balthasar his son, that their days may be upon earth as the days of heaven." They found this direction, not upon any cowardly dread of his might, nor any blind admiration of his grandeur, but upon their confident expectation of his protection. "The Lord," say they, "will give us strength, and lighten our eyes, and we shall live under the shadow of Nabuchodonosor, the King of Babylon, and under the shadow of Balthasar his son, and we shall serve them many days, and find favour in their sight." Baruch i. 1, 9, 12.

Thus they would not have written, and thus they could not have felt, if they had experienced oppression, or presaged it. But in reality they had been favoured as men seldom are who live under a foreign master; they were sensible of favour, as men usually are, when it is conferred by those who have the means of doing injury, and loving the protector, they were more disposed to obey the King. So rooted, indeed, is this sentiment in our nature—so necessary is it for the safety of princes that terror should be attempered by some degree of affection, that they have disguised the harsher features of

despotism under mild appellations assumed by themselves. Few men could be prevailed upon in express terms to implore a blessing upon the head of Peter the Cruel of Castile; but many were found to make intercession, and prayers, and giving of thanks for the successors of Alexander, when one of them was called Ptolemy, Soter, or the "Saviour," and another Ptolemy Evergetes, or "Benefactor."

So far as we learn from Holy Writ, all was well with the subjects of Darius and Nabuchodonosor. But their descendants, who at a later period returned from captivity to their native country, were less reasonable in their opinions, and less praiseworthy in their practice. Thus, when the Gospel was first preached, the inhabitants of Judea were impatient of the Roman yoke, and were ready to join the standard of any republican upstart, to take up arms against those who had dominion over them by the right of conquest. The Christian converts also had imbibed many strange and pernicious notions about liberty, as implying not merely their deliverance from the bondage of sin, but exemption from allegiance to their earthly governors. Hence the misconception of both were to be rectified by the precepts of Paul to Timothy. He says, "That we are to pray, and to give thanks for our rulers;" and here you will take notice, that while religion provides for the good order of society, it does not permit us to trample under foot the lower classes of mankind; nor does it give the slightest encouragement to tyranny of any kind, or under any disguise. Though we pray especially for Kings, we pray generally for

all men; we are to pray not for Kings only, but for all that are in authority, and of course the injunction extends to every form of government, be it a monarchy or an aristocracy, or democracy, or that mixed and more perfect frame of polity which is established in these realms. But farther still, St. Paul, while he recommends obedience, does not hold such language as would gratify the pride of sovereigns at the expence of their subjects; he exhorts, not like a supple and narrow-minded politician, but like an impartial and benevolent moralist—he assigns a reason in which the well-being of the governed is equally included with that of governors themselves. Mark, I beseech you, his simple and energetic words —"Pray for all men, for Kings, and all that are in authority." Why? "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

Thus consistent, thus comprehensive, thus salutary, is the principle recognized and enforced by the Apostle; and you will carefully notice that the general force of the obligation to pray for men in authority is yet more conspicuous from the particular circumstances in which St. Paul and his converts were placed. Christianity was taught to various people, Jews and Gentiles, who were subject to Heathen rulers. Some of these rulers were rapacious extortioners, others odious oppressors, others abandoned voluptuaries; and all of them polytheists and idolaters; and yet for all of them, in respect both to their temporal and spiritual concerns, we are commanded to intercede. But mark well, that

the same command reaches us with increased force when monarchs have embraced the same faith, when they worship at the same altar, when they are not rapacious extortioners, nor odious oppressors, nor abandoned voluptuaries. Again, you must perceive that the charity we are to exercise towards Kings is also due to their subjects. If we are solicitously to pray for Kings that they may be prosperous, it cannot be for one moment supposed that we are not to pray for the great bulk of mankind, who can be made happy by discreet and equitable government —that we are not to pray for consolation and relief to those who, living under wicked Kings, are fast bound in misery and iron—that we are not to pray even for those wicked Kings themselves, that they may discern their destructive errors, curb their fierce passions, subdue their stubborn habits, and by fostering whom they had plundered, or relieving whom they had oppressed, make some expiation for their atrocious enormities.

But even this is not the whole of what the text suggests to a considerate reader. For surely, if the primitive Christians were to pray—if they were to intercede—if they were to give thanks for rulers immersed in all the speculative, and all the practical corruptions of Heathenism, little ground can there be in these later times for you, my hearers, to withdraw your good-will and your good services from such of your Christian brethren as differ from you in some points of abstruse doctrine and arbitrary discipline, and yet unite with you in acknowledging one God and common Father of the Universe—

one Holy Redeemer—one rule of conduct prescribed in his Gospel—one hope of a blessed futurity, warranted by his glorious promises. If, then, with the clear conviction of your understandings, and with the honest emotions of your hearts you recommend dissenters, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, to the protection of God, it is impossible for you not to look with the deepest regret upon the mischievous artifices of statesmen—the base compliances of hypocrites—the malignant calumnies of bigots—and the deliberate cruelties of persecutors. If you do not intercede for them to heaven, if you do not give thanks for their better personal qualities, for their actual or possible services to yourselves, and for their participation with yourselves in God's most inestimable gifts in the means of grace, in the hope of glory, then you neglect the duty which St. Paul imposes upon you. If, while you pray for them, and while you give thanks, you inwardly cherish a spirit of rancorous intolerance, or Pharisaical arrogance, then, my brethren, your prayers and your thanks are an impious mockery in the sight of heaven.

Similar to my own were the sentiments of many enlightened ecclesiastics in our *own* Church, as you may learn from an event which deserves your serious attention, and amply justifies the inferences I have drawn from the text. In the original service for the 5th of November, the Gospel was in Matthew xxvii. 1—10. But vehement as was the indignation of our countrymen against the outrages said to have been committed on that day, this part of the service,

upon cool deliberation, was not thought entirely proper; and first, another Gospel selected from Luke ix. 5—57, was substituted, "in order," says a sensible, but very orthodox writer, "to correct the unruly effects of mistaken zeal for religion, and to show us that our faith, be it ever so true, cannot warrant us to persecute or destroy those of different persuasions." So did Wheatley say well; and where, say I, can you look for more decisive evidence of the principles really maintained by any religious community, than in those formularies, which are drawn up with a direct and professed view to the connexion that subsists between Church and State? Where do you expect the teachers of that community to speak more boldly and more ardently, than when they give thanks for deliverance from a conspiracy, which in their judgment tended to the subversion both of our ecclesiastical and civil establishments? Yet with such sentiments and for such purposes did English ecclesiastics recommend moderation.

Whatsoever may be the untoward prejudices, or the specious professions, or the headstrong passions of some Churchmen, I gladly bear my testimony to the solid merits of the Church itself; and to the common sense of those who are within, and those who are without the pale of it, do I confidently appeal, when I pronounce the facts just now mentioned to you to be most worthy of an establishment, which elsewhere makes it a part of our supplications to the Creator and Preserver of mankind, "that all who call themselves Chris-

men may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." The words prescribed by our Church differ a little from those which St. Paul, as you have just now heard, addressed to Timothy; but their import is precisely the same.

From this train of general reflections, suggested to me by the text and context, I return to the express terms used by St. Paul. When you attend to the solemn introduction, and the specific mention of Kings and those who are in authority, you must perceive at a glance the very great stress which the Apostle laid upon the practice of his converts in respect to those distinguished personages; and you at the same time will see the propriety of my selecting such a Scriptural passage, as adapted to your grave consideration upon this day. I proceed therefore, first, to point out the reasonableness and importance of making intercession and giving thanks for Kings; and secondly, I shall advert to certain theological and historical topics more immediately connected with the occasion upon which we are now assembled in the house of God.

The Apostle's words, as interpreted by St. Austin, a learned father of the Church, direct us to offer up *desires*, or *deprecations* that evil may be averted from rulers; προσευχὰς, or *petitions* that good may be decreed for them; ἐντεύξεις, or *occasional intercessions* that needful graces may be conferred upon them; εὐχαριστίας, or *thanks*, when they have fulfilled the high functions of their

station by effecting a signal deliverance of their people from some impending danger, or by redressing some grievous and inveterate wrongs, or by diffusing general happiness in the regular and ordinary administration of government. But, if the Christian religion teaches general benevolence, how is it conceivable that men in authority can be excluded? If it can be inculcated intelligibly and usefully only by reference to the power men have of doing good, must we not allow that Kings, having a larger share of such power are proportionately the first objects of our prayers? If we are bidden to pray for equals, for inferiors, for strangers, even for enemies, can it be imagined for one moment that we are not likewise to pray for Magistrates, Legislators and Sovereigns? If all men, by similitude of corporal and mental frame, and by participation with us in the productions of nature, and the administration of God's moral government, are allied to us, do not these weighty considerations extend to Governors? Yes, and in some sense they do so more visibly and more urgently. Sovereigns form, or at least, by every clear political, and every sound religious principle, they are required to form such plans, as may preserve us from foreign enemies—they create or enforce those laws which guard us from secret fraud and open violence—they enable us to sleep with safety on our pillows, and to go forth cheerfully and securely to our daily labours.

Do we then, profess to love the public weal? That very love ought to give us an interest in

the happiness of those who preside over communities. When their thrones are shaken, the direction of public affairs must be reserved for untried, and it may be, unskilful hands; every public and every private interest are exposed to destruction and rapine—misrule and carnage fill up the frightful interval between the commencement and the termination of civil contests.—"Let the King live," therefore, as the Scripture says, in the language no less of patriotism than loyalty—the language of reason, as well as revelation—the language of plain experience, as well as just and profound theory. Even the primitive Christians, though they refused to swear by the *genius* of Cæsar, because this was in effect to acknowledge him as a sort of divinity, were yet ready to swear by his health or his safety, because health and safety were the gifts of heaven, and because in the possession of that, the welfare not of Cæsar himself only, but of Cæsar's subjects, was deeply concerned. In reality the true honour of a Prince is inseparable from the glory of his people; and how can he acquire it without their aid in his counsels or his arms; and how can he retain it without their approbation and concurrence? The true prosperity of a Prince is united with the well-being of his subjects; for they share with him, not perhaps in the fruits of wanton aggression or inordinate ambition, which are precarious and false prosperity, but in all the advantages which flow through a state from the steady, judicious, and honest exercise of regal power. The personal vir-

tues of a Prince are most favourable to the cause of good morals among his people. His practice here is more efficacious than his commands; it not only compels us to admire, but incites us to imitate. We then recognise his justice, whether he confers honour on good citizens, or inflicts punishment upon the bad. In his power we discern the shield of innocence, and the shelter of unoffending weakness, from the scornfulness of the proud, and the despitefulness of the oppressive. Prayer thus becomes a great office of charity to the public. When you pray for the personal safety, the true honour, the true glory of a Sovereign—when you give thanks for his exemplary regularity, or purity, or piety—you pray and give thanks for all the benefits these causes severally produce to yourselves, to your families, to your neighbourhood, and to your countrymen.

No acts of mere external homage—no observance of the ceremonies which are established in courts—no bowing of the heads—no prostration of the body—no smile on the countenance—no complimentary forms of address from the tongue, are such unequivocal, or such becoming marks of your sincerity, as the prayers you put forth to Almighty God that Monarchs, knowing whose ministers they are, may above all things seek God's honour, and God's glory; and that, in consequence of their wise and upright counsels, which, under the guidance of God's spirit, and for the furtherance of God's will, Kings have pursued, subjects may be led faithfully to respect, to serve, and to obey them.

Struck with the glare of expensive pageantries—the magnitude of palaces—the crowds of attendants—and the glittering attire of armed legions—a superficial observer considers not the difficulties which surround the mightiest potentate. Exposed they are to dangers, many seen, many unseen; and therefore they stand in abundant need of assistance from above. Their affairs require great skill, and therefore it is to be devoutly wished that God would grant them that princely character of mind for which David thus prays:—"Make me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me," Ps. li. 10. They have to deliberate upon obscure and intricate matters, where human experience supplies no expedients—where human foresight discovers only the probability of peril or defeat—where to judge uprightly or to determine prudently, makes it necessary for every prince to say with Solomon, "Give thy servant an understanding heart, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this so great people?" (Wisdom.) Is a Prince beset with innumerable temptations, in the soft blandishments of luxury, or the greater excesses of sensuality? Let us pray that he may resist them. Has he been led astray by abject flatterers, or corrupt desires? Let us pray that the advice of intelligent, upright, and affectionate counsellors may reach his ears. Is he ignorant of the occurrences and causes which mightily affect the common weal? Let us pray that the light of truth may be poured upon his understanding. Has he yielded to the impulses of ambition? Let us pray that he

may quickly and distinctly see the dangers in which it may involve himself, his progeny, and the people committed to his charge. Is he engaged in warfare really just and necessary? Let us pray for his success, and to our prayers let us add the cheerful payment of taxes, and the exertions of personal courage. Has he fallen into any heinous sin? Let us pray that, by the assistance of God, he may return to a better mind—let us reflect upon our own infirmities—and let us be grateful to heaven for allotting to us that humbler situation, where the opportunities for vice are fewer—the inticements to it less alluring—and the consequences of it less injurious to ourselves and our fellow creatures. Has he patronized arts and science and learning? Has he encouraged the industry and ingenuity of his subjects? Has he showed strength in his arm for the support of a righteous cause? Has he scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, and brought down the mighty from their seat, where they tyrannised over the world? Has he exalted the humble and meek, and filled the hungry with good things? Let us give thanks to God for all the blessings which, as the chosen minister of God, he has thus bestowed upon us, and let us acknowledge that in appointing for us such a rewarder of those who do well, and such a chastiser of evil doers, God has continued the mercies shown to our forefathers, and holpen his servant Israel.

In private life you think it presumptuous to expect the favour of heaven, unless you implore it; and why should you look for public blessings, unless you feel

and express the same reliance upon that being, from whom alone they proceed? It has long been a subject of complaint, that subjects often suffer from the prejudices, or the ignorances, or the vices of Kings; and is it not a topic of just exultation, that they also derive many advantages from their wisdom, and their virtue? If you are to pray that a bad king may be awakened by the voice of conscience, and turn away from the wickedness that he hath committed, ought you not to give thanks for the benign and auspicious influence of a righteous governor, upon the affairs of the land; and with your thanks to unite most fervent supplications, that no dangers may hereafter overtake him—that no temptation may seduce him—and that he may persevere in the right way even to the end of his reign?

I disdain, my brethren, to inculcate any hollow and slavish doctrines, which are to make you blind to the real disposition, and real character of rulers—to make you careless about their counsels or their measures—to make you submissive to their unjust and insolent demands—to make you not candid, but favourable to their habitual and notorious crimes. Far be it from me, as a man of letters—as an inheritor of English freedom—as a teacher of that religion which came down from heaven—very far be it from me in this, and in every other place, to confound those moral distinctions, which the hand of God has engraven upon our hearts—to prophesy smooth things at the nod, or for the purposes of bad men—to put sweet for bitter, or

bitter for sweet. But I am conscious of recommending to you a most reasonable duty, when I entreat you to pray for kings, and those who are in authority, because such a practice unites your social with your religious character. You cannot wantonly insult—you cannot impudently revile—you cannot factiously oppose your lawful governor, if you seriously and sincerely introduce his name into your petitions before the throne of God. If, then, you reflect that God's ears are open to your supplications in his favour—if you bear in mind that the eyes of God are over your actions towards that person, who, by His unerring will, and for His benevolent purposes, has been set over you—if you consider that on his good qualities and corresponding actions depend your own welfare, and that of your country—if you really believe that a just providence is exercised over the public, as well as the private concerns of mankind—you will see the necessity of observing the exhortation St. Paul urged upon Timothy and his followers. From prayer and intercession the act of giving thanks cannot be separated; for, if a nation has experienced some striking or unexpected deliverance from imminent peril, or long continued calamity—if laws are wisely made, and faithfully administered—if the goodly sight of general safety, and general prosperity stands before you—if the established religion of your country should present the best instructions, and the best aids for yourselves and your neighbours to lead a godly and quiet life—and if you make all these advantages the subjects of your frequent and

earnest supplication to the Deity, then a sense of gratitude will be instantly stirred up within you—then you will see an intimate connection between the piety of individuals and the well-being of the public—and then most assuredly will you give thanks to Almighty God for having granted those petitions, which had been previously suggested to your minds by dutiful affection to a Sovereign, and by general and unfeigned zeal for the happiness of fellow-subjects, and fellow creatures, and fellow Christians.

I have an entire reliance upon the justness of the foregoing observations, and I know them to be important; and leaving the particular application of them to your own consciences, I conceive the general result of them to be this—Allegiance is to be guarded by respect—the observance of both is facilitated and consecrated by a rational and deep principle of piety—that piety is to be cherished by private meditation, and will occasionally show itself in well-timed and well directed effusions of prayer and thanksgiving for Kings and those who are in authority. But the properest and noblest end of that respect, that allegiance, and that piety, is that we may secure our own temporal and spiritual happiness by leading a quiet and peaceable life, and thus perfecting what is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.

I shall now, in the second place, advert to some theological and historical points immediately connected with the occasion upon which we are assembled in this Sanctuary.

Now, in conformity to the Apostle's exhortation,

prayers and thanksgivings in ancient times were offered up by Kings and their people on the anniversaries of their inauguration. The Church of England seems to have begun this laudable custom in the days of Charles I. It ceased during the Commonwealth; and after the restoration of Charles II. a considerable portion of the service, drawn up in his royal father's time, was incorporated with the devotions now used on the eighth of May. But, after the accession of James II. the original practice was revived, and a form of prayer, agreeing in many respects, not in all, with our present, was prepared by the Bishops. Under William III. the inauguration festival was again discontinued, and some additions, made to the service for the 5th of November, were thought a full equivalent. When Queen Anne came to the throne a part of the office, employed in James's reign, was restored, and other parts entirely new were composed.

The alterations since made are these. The first lesson was in Proverbs 8th, from verse 13th to the end of the chapter; but we now have part of the first of Joshua, the whole of which had been read in the days of Charles I. and was renewed by James II. The ten verses retained set before us the appointment of Joshua to succeed Moses in the government of the Israelites, and the instructions then given to Israel immediately by the Lord their God. In the Psalms there is a change; for, instead of the 85th and 118th, which had been introduced into James's office, and which had a reference to the exile of himself and his brother, the 101st Psalm was judici-

ously substituted by the ecclesiastics whom Queen Anne employed. But the most rational alteration, or I should rather say, the most valuable improvement, is the appointment of the prayer for unity—an appointment most seasonable and most congenial to the principles of civil and religious freedom, which brought the illustrious house of Brunswick to the sovereignty of these realms—a prayer so weighty in its matter, so perfect in its style, so Christian in its principles, so solemn in its spirit, so beneficial in its tendency as not to be surpassed by any other formulary in our excellent Church service. You will hear it, and I hope cordially join in it to day. You may at any time find it in your Prayer-book, and sorry I am that ecclesiastics are not authorised to repeat it very often.

As to our present duty, I have long intended to read the service for this day, and more than three weeks ago I drew up a paper to announce that my intention, and my readiness to use any additional form, which my ecclesiastical superiors might send to me. Such a form has been delivered to me; it has been read to you, nor can I as a well-wisher to the Church dissemble my wishes that some of the topics had been more luminous, some of the sentences more unembarrassed, and the whole character of the composition more appropriate and more impassioned. But these petty defects are abundantly supplied by other and more cheering considerations. The good sense of Englishmen may for a short season be obscured by prejudice, and their good-nature obstructed by passion. Yet there are occa-

sions on which these qualities, by which as a nation we seem to be eminently distinguished, are called into vigorous action—and seldom have they been exercised with more propriety than in the substitution of acts of charity and mercy for superfluous ostentation and unprofitable festivities, which often carry with them prodigal expence, and sometimes terminate in riotous intemperance. The precedents set by some large manufacturing towns and the capital, has been eagerly followed through the kingdom, and the inhabitants of almost every village will to day display their joy in a manner the most creditable to themselves as Englishmen and Christians, and the most pleasing, I trust, to the venerable person who now sways the sceptre of these kingdoms. Looking back to his own situation and advanced time of life, he may be disposed to say with Barzillai—" I am three score and ten years old; and can I discern any longer between good and evil? can I taste what I eat, or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?" But he cannot have forgotten the genuine exclamation of David, when his subjects, ashamed of their revolt, had brought back their king over Jordan; and surely the uninterrupted allegiance of his own people gives our monarch stronger reasons than David had for exclaiming, " Shall any man be put to death this day in Israel?" Invested he is not with divine power to give sight to the blind; but he can imitate divine mercy in loosing out of prison. The glory of many other Sovereigns may be compared to a vertical sun in the torrid zone, where it dazzles the

spectators by the excess of splendour, and at the same time enfeebles them by intenseness of heat. But the setting orb of sovereignty among ourselves will, I trust, be arrayed in purer and milder lustre. Viewed will it be with glowing attention by the present age, and with calm delight by the latest posterity, as it may be manifested in "refreshing those who are weary and heavy-laden, in bringing good tidings unto the meek, in binding up the broken-hearted, in proclaiming liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, and thus proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord." Isaiah, lxi. 1, 2.—Whoso doeth these things buildeth his throne upon the rock of righteousness; and, though the rains may rush down, and the tempests rage, it shall never fall.

In order to impress upon your minds more deeply the information I endeavoured to communicate on Sunday last, let me briefly repeat what I then delivered as preparatory matter for this day's solemnity. I told you that Jubilee was not derived, as the Rabbins say, from a word that means *ram's horn*—that it does not, as others think, represent the sound of the trumpet with which the feast was ushered in—that more probably it comes from a word which signifies *to restore* or *bring back*—that it includes what the Septuagint render ἄφεσις or *remission*, and ἐλευθερία or *liberty*—that this liberty is, according to our modern and correct distinction, not political, but civil and personal—that the Jews, who had been in servitude for some years, and all those who had voluntarily, or from poverty,

again subjected themselves to slavery, were restored to their freedom—that alienated lands were given back to families—that a religious institution was thus made subservient even to good policy, and to beneficence—that it promoted the comforts of individuals—that it upheld the proper character of the state, and therefore was, in all respects, most worthy of a sage and humane legislator. I also told you that a jubilee among Christians was first decreed by Boniface VIII. in 1300, and was to be repeated every 100th year—that Clement VII. reduced the period to fifty, Urban VI. to thirty-five, and Sextus IV. to twenty-five. In regard to our own country, we have had no other jubilee except one which was observed in the time of Edward III. who released prisoners, pardoned all offences, not excepting even treason, and granted many privileges to a brave and loyal people. The mention of this event naturally leads me to state to you that three only of our Monarchs, since the conquest, have reigned, more or less, to the commencement of the fiftieth year, and what is remarkable enough, that each of them is the third of their respective names, Henry III., Edward III., George III.

For reasons, which will not be displeasing or uninteresting to the minds of Englishmen, I shall now enter into a short historical detail. On the death of his father John, who attained the crown by usurpation, and perhaps murder, and during the life of Eleanor, the sister of prince Arthur, who was the lawful heir, Henry III. was in 1216 crowned at Gloucester; in 1219 he was a second time

crowned in the same city; and in 1227 he declared himself of full age. But before this time he had illegally seized the crown lands. About this time he cancelled the great charter, and the charter of the forest, which he had sworn to observe; and after such indications of a tyrannical heart in his youth, and, I had almost said his boy-hood, we are not to be surprised that he broke through the most solemn engagements, violated the rights of his people, excited many formidable conspiracies, was taken prisoner at the battle of Lewes, was put against his will in the front of his rebellious army at the battle of Evesham, by Simon Montfort, and though rescued by his son, who had marched thither from Kenilworth, and, though afterwards supported by faithful nobles, and loyal subjects, he made the most ungracious return for their fidelity and their valour—neither reverence for God, nor good-will to man, produced a jubilee while Henry reigned. He was weak in his understanding, fickle in his temper, despotic in his aims; and for the commotions which molested his repose, and even endangered his life, little commiseration is due to him, because he was a perjured negociator, a perfidious tyrant, a vindictive foe. He died in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and the fifty-seventh of his reign, if we count his minority; but he reigned somewhat less than forty-six years only, if we calculate from the day when he was twenty-one, and had a right to exercise the regal power without any interposition from guardians.

Edward III. on the 12th of January 1327, as-

cended the throne when he was fourteen years old; he was placed under the Archbishop of Canterbury and eleven nobles as his guardians. But the intrigues of a wicked mother had a most malignant influence upon public affairs, and while a beardless, and, we hope, a harmless youth, even in the first year of his reign, he had the mortification to find that Edward, his deluded and deposed father, had been rudely dragged from Kenilworth, and inhumanly butchered at Berkeley Castle by the instigation of a savage wife, and Mortimer, the associate of her lust, her ambition, and her cruelty. In April 1376 Edward entered on his fiftieth year, and as the day of his inauguration was also his birth-day, he celebrated a jubilee in the manner already described to you. He died at Sheen, or Richmond, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and the fifty-first of his reign, if we include the minority, or, if we exclude it, his reign according to our laws will not exceed forty-eight years. This prince left to his successors one most awful warning against evil, and many noble encouragements to good—he left a warning, when he suffered his reason and his dignity to be bound in the spells of an infamous harlot, who in his dying moments, when courtiers, ministers, and favourites, as their manner is, had forsaken him, pillaged jewels from his private casket, and rings from his trembling hands, and then left him to breathe his last in the presence of a priest, who, by mere accident, had entered his apartment. He left them encouragements, not only by his magnanimity and his policy, in just hostility against

France and Scotland, but by his munificence in stately buildings, and the revenues with which he endowed them for the purposes of learning, or charity, or piety, such as the abbey of Eastminster, near the Tower, a Nunnery at Dartford, the King's Hall at Cambridge, an Hospital at Calais, and St. Stephen's Chapel at Westminster.

On contrasting the history of these two Monarchs with that of our venerable Sovereign, you cannot fail to remark that his natural life already exceeds that of both his royal predecessors—that he came to the throne under circumstances far more agreeable to himself, and far more beneficial to his people—that he had to contend with none of the difficulties and dangers which usually attend the minority of princes—that he did not bring with him a dubious title, like that of Henry, whose cousin the princess Eleanor, and the lawful heiress, was living when he was crowned—that his accession was not disgraced by the turbulent and disastrous scenes which mark the beginning of Edward's reign from the machinations and debaucheries of the queen dowager, and her execrable accomplices in libertinism and oppression—that he was not impelled by any motives of self-defence, or ambition, to thwart the decisions of the laws by anticipating as Edward arbitrarily did the period of political maturity—and finally, that having begun to reign when he was legally of age, he has already performed the plenary and uncontrolled functions of majesty somewhat longer than any other English sovereign.

On circumstances so singular, so important, and

et me add, so advantageous to the King and the country, the mind of every honest Englishman will dwell with satisfaction; and, though strange convulsions have disturbed the security, or destroyed the independence of other states, the shock has been seen rather than felt at home. Here the limits of obedience and authority are better defined by the laws, and better understood by the Monarch and the subject, than in any other European nation. Here substantially and visibly they have a common interest in discharging their several duties for the common good. Here each must find his own safety, and his own glory, in protecting the rights, and contributing to the happiness of the other.

As to the specific merits of the measures that have been adopted, or the comparative qualifications of the ministers who have been employed during a long and eventful reign—they are points very unfit to be discussed in a discourse from the pulpit, but very fit to be investigated impartially and seriously by every honest and enlightened well-wisher to our Sion, and equally fit to be recorded accurately, and explained copiously by future writers. Placed will they be in a situation where it will be incumbent upon them, and where it will be easy for them, to applaud without adulation—to condemn without rancour—to speak of men without personal love or hatred, and to appreciate Kings without the hope of unjust gain, or the fear of unmerited persecution. To their testimony will every wise sovereign appeal, not as the willing or unwilling tools of any petty sect or fleet-

ing party—not as the timid vassals of despotism—not as the profligate hirelings of corruption, but as the faithful expositors of facts, and the just dispensers of ultimate fame or infamy. It is for the historian, then, to develope the views of Sovereigns and their counsellors—to hold up their private and their public excellencies to imitation—and to trace the connection between cause and effect in their foreign and their domestic policy. It is for the moralist to expatiate on the intimate and unalterable relation that subsists between morals and politics; and to show that the stratagems of the cunning, and the outrages of the ambitious are counteracted by the righteous and irresistible will of the Deity. From the fidelity of their statements, and the justness of their remarks, future Sovereigns and future subjects may learn the perilous consequences of base craftiness and unfeeling violence on the one hand, and of perverse discontent and turbulent submission on the other.

In respect to myself, it is my office not to gratify your pride—not to cherish your prejudices—not to inflame your passions—but to point out plainly what I think the indisputable obligations which lie upon you to pray for Kings, and all that are in authority; and in your various callings to support by precept and example the noble form of society under which you live. He that endeavours to understand the genuine principles of our justly admired constitution—he that would preserve them from the encroachments of the venal, and vindicate them from the misrepresentations of

the factious—he that pays tribute where tribute is due, and honour where honour—he that contemplates the peculiar blessings granted to this kingdom, as issuing from the peculiar excellence and energy of those usages and institutions which have been transmitted to us by our forefathers, and which cannot be too diligently watched, too highly valued, or too firmly defended by ourselves—he that elevates his thoughts from these secular considerations to that Being, "from whom cometh every perfect gift"—such a man, in the real and indeed the only justifiable sense of the word, is a loyal subject. Connecting the interests of the present with those of a future world—obeying "not only forwrath, but for conscience sake"—exhorting others to obey—and discouraging, so far as in him lieth, every attempt to palliate the gradual but baneful progress of corruption, the insolent usurpations of regal ambition, and the turbulent extravagances of popular licentiousness—such a man deserves well of a Sovereign and his successor—of countrymen and their posterity. While ministers disguise what may be wrong—while courtiers exaggerate what is right—while ignorant bigots bluster—while mischievous incendiaries rail—while the rash and giddy multitude shout to-day in songs of triumph, and to-morrow upon any real, or any imaginary grievance, would turn their pruning-hooks into swords—such a man listens to the distinct and authoritative admonitions of his own well-informed and well-directed reason. He will praise with ardour—he will censure with reluctance—but he will strive to judge uprightly—

and upon every proper occasion he will avow his judgment, and abide by it with moderation unfeigned, or with fortitude undismayed. Whatsoever offences may come, and whatsoever punishments may be reserved for those by whom they come, the purity of his honour will be unsullied, and the serenity of his mind will be undisturbed—he will love peace, and he will ensue it, both at home and abroad, so far as may be consistent with the sacred rules of justice, and the imperious claims of self-preservation. Whether he looks back to the dreadful changes which have subverted governments in other countries, or surveys the dangers which may be gathered around his own—whether he is called upon to stand forth as the advocate of constitutional freedom, or the champion of legitimate obedience—whether he communes with his own heart in the stillness of the chamber, or asserts his opinions amidst the noisy conflicts of party—whether, under a serious conviction of his own responsibility to God and man, in his public as well as his private conduct, he meditates on the hour of death, or prepares himself for the day of judgment—such a man, and such a man alone, may indulge the humble but earnest hope of final acceptance at the tribunal of God.

# SERMON XLVI.

ON THE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS.

## MATTHEW v. 6.

*Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.*

WERE we to confine our attention merely to the letter of this benediction, it would not be easy for us to resist some cavils, which have been started concerning the supposed inaccuracy of the expression. It might be urged, that the whole course of human experience is opposite to the blessedness here proposed — that hunger and thirst, in a figurative point of view, imply a most eager and earnest desire —that desire always denotes the absence of the good proposed—that this absence is invariably the cause of pain—and that the degree of this pain is proportioned to the intrinsic or assumed value of the object — and therefore, that as righteousness itself is highly valuable, and appears such to every judicious and serious man, the situation of him who hungers and thirsts after it, is not only destitute of happiness, but even replete with misery. And can it with truth, or with reverence, be said of the founder

of Christianity, that he assigns contradictory properties to the operations of the human mind — or recommends as a good what must eventually be found an evil?

Yet the force of this objection will be considerably broken, if we observe that our Saviour's words are not to be taken absolutely, but with restrictions. The desire of holiness, merely as such, does not, and cannot be said to confer perfect happiness. For it is in the possession certainly, as in all other cases, that our chief well-being must consist. And who doubts but that those beings, whose intellectual and moral capacities are more enlarged than our own, do, from the attainment of that excellence to which they long aspired, experience a purer and more elevated satisfaction than could here be reached amidst the struggles of temptation, and the mortifications of frequent disappointments?

Indeed the text itself is decisive, that while we hunger and thirst after righteousness, our felicity is in some measure incomplete, for it is said — they *shall be* filled. The plain and obvious meaning of which is, that if men do justly esteem, and sincerely pursue virtue— if, in the prosecution of it, they endure every trial and encounter every danger—if they suffer themselves to be neither drawn aside by pleasure, nor impeded by adversity—then shall their upright intentions, and strenuous endeavours be crowned with an adequate reward at the last.

Must we then consider it as an evil to hunger and thirst after righteousness? No surely, it is a partial, and a comparative good. For compare the

situation of him who fixes his attention on the attainment of the one thing necessary, with that of men who either neglect it totally, or perversely prefer to it the more perishing and frivolous objects of this sublunary world. Would you choose to live in a state of stupid and brutal insensibility to your duty, and the connection in which it stands with your happiness—or would you rather endure that consciousness of your defects and danger, which can alone enable you to supply the one and avert the other? Would you roll down the stream of life unalarmed and unconcerned about your future condition—or would you rather be subject to those salutary fears which religion excites, and by which it enables us to work out our own salvation, though it be sometimes with profound humiliation, and sometimes with trembling solicitude? Or, on the other hand, finding yourself placed in a world, where happiness is not immediately forced upon you — where it is to be gained only by reiterated endeavours—where those endeavours are to be proportioned to the intenseness of our desires, and where our desires may be directed to various ends —what now shall be your aim? Will you pant for honour? Will you toil after wealth? and revel in voluptuousness? Or, suspecting the happiness conferred by them to be fleeting and treacherous, will you bend the whole force of your thoughts to that righteousness, the ardent and unfeigned love of which shall not fail of its recompence?

He that never feels this love will assuredly form a despicable and ignoble character; and though

from the absence of opportunity, or through the langour of his affections, he may never be betrayed into any outrageous crime, yet will he certainly be incapable of that elevated and resolute virtue which Christianity exacts from its followers. They who hunger and thirst after the good things of this life, will often be disappointed; and even where they are most successful, they will not derive any lasting satisfaction—they cannot be secure from loosing to-morrow what to day was obtained, and under their loss they will have no inward reflections to soothe their sorrow, and to reanimate their hopes. But if you fix your hopes and your aims on righteousness, though much anxiety is to be suffered — though much labour is to be exerted—though many delays and miscarriages may be expected, yet we shall in the end receive a sure and permanent and ample recompence.

After this vindication of the blessing proposed in my text, I shall concisely show, first, what is the righteousness here meant; then, what we are to understand by hungering after it. Without perplexing your minds on the wild and confused disputes that have been raised on the subject of justification, which has for its original the same word that is translated "righteousness" in the text, it may suffice to observe, that the word is used sometimes to signify the whole extent of our duty—and sometimes the efficacy of it, when performed diligently, to obtain the favour of God. The difference here is only that which subsists between the means and the end. As all human excellence is in some mea-

sure defective—as the best of men are betrayed into sins, and the wisest into errors—as we often neglect what is enjoined, and commit what is forbidden, no man, on the strength of personal merit, is properly and fully justified in the sight of God. On the other hand, if our disobedience be flagrant and habitual, it is vain to claim the promises of the Deity, when we have not performed the conditions. Be not deceived by vain and empty words. Saved you are by grace, that is, by favour. But this salvation depends much upon yourselves—not on a mere profession of faith—not upon the implicit admission of this or that doctrine—not on supernatural, and I will add, most unintelligible and pretended effusions of the spirit, but upon an honest and religious life. When you make God's laws the rule of your actions —when you govern all your turbulent and impure passions—when you attend to your secular interests in subordination to your spiritual, then only are you, in the scriptural sense of the word, righteous ; —and though it be true that, in many points we all offend, yet if we be sincere in our wishes and constant in our efforts to deserve the approbation of the Supreme Being, he will not frustrate those wishes, or suffer those efforts to lose their effect. Indeed it is not easy in practice to separate the two meanings of the word righteousness, or justification, so far as they unite our well-being hereafter with our well-doing here.

It is therefore an unsullied and a holy life, of which Heaven is the recompence, that we are to understand by righteousness; and they who would

embarrass the expression with philosophical comments on the disinterestedness of virtue, or with religious difficulties about the terms of acceptance, only confound what is in itself plain, and distract your opinions without reforming your morals.

But, what is meant, you will say, by hungering after it? Surely, my brethren, a more pertinent and more forcible expression cannot be found. As you are persuaded that meat and drink are necessary to the preservation and comfort of your life, so is righteousness essential to your future felicity. The instinct that impels you to provide for your bodily preservation is strong; and, in like manner, the desires that urge you in acquiring all Christian graces must be vigorous and constant. He that is parched with thirst, or pining with hunger, does not slumber in dull inaction. He, that feels the importance of a religious conduct, is not slow in improving the opportunities which God has given of providing for the final security of his immortal soul. We cannot pity the infatuated wretch who, when he is tortured by craving appetites, puts forth no endeavours to satisfy them. We cannot but condemn the deluded sinner, who, knowing that Heaven will be given to those only who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for immortality, yet is languid and listless in his pursuit of the supreme good. To wish for happiness is indeed natural; we are all of us disposed to join in the prayer of Balaam, that we may die the death of the righteous; and readily acknowledge it the noblest good of which, as moral agents, we are capable, that we may

be permitted to see the Lord. But then we neglect the means that can alone procure for us what we desire. We are willing to be happy, if that happiness is compatible with our criminal indulgences—if we may have leave to riot in sensuality—to heap up riches, and to grasp at inordinate power. But God has not so directed the course of things, that his best rewards should be bestowed upon those who are content only with admiring them, and asking for them. We must so run as to obtain. We must contend resolutely with our spiritual adversaries—we must strive to enter in at the strait gate; and if these exertions are not made, we certainly trifle with our dearest interests, and our desire of salvation holds but a secondary and subordinate place. On the other hand, if we really comply with the precept indirectly laid down in the text, we shall be filled—we shall be blessed in part now, and completely after this existence is closed.

Do you not believe that if you look for that spiritual food which is beautifully called the bread of life, such a desire is not in itself a manifest indication of the sound state of your minds? If, in the bodily appetites there is pain, they are yet signs of health; so in our religious concerns, although the mere desire of religious improvement be attended with some uneasiness, it is a sorrow which is soon converted into joy. You feel at the moment that your aims are honorable, that religion warrants your endeavours, and that God will most certainly assist them. Then shall we ask and receive. What we seek industriously, we shall find abundantly.

But the justness of our Lord's expression will appear yet from a more close comparison. Our hunger is felt, and satisfied; but it returns, and demands new gratifications. Thus in religious matters, we aim at one end; and when we have attained it, another presents itself to our view, excites a desire equally ardent, and calls for exertions equally strenuous. When we have encountered one enemy we are called upon to contend with another—after forsaking one vice, we have others to prevent or remedy — after conquering one lust, we are in danger of being subdued by another — after guarding against presumptuous sins, we have need to search into our secret faults. In one season, we are to watch against the pleasures, and in another, against the cares of the world. In prosperity we are to exercise gratitude, as well as patience in adversity. The violence of our passions is to be curbed in youth; and then comes on a task equally arduous and indispensable—to watch against that inordinate attachment to the acquisition of money—that flintiness and coldness of heart—that stubbornness and perverseness of temper, which may be considered as the prevailing offences of a more advanced age. It is not therefore, by providing against one evil, but by directing our caution and fortitude against all the temptations which surround us, that we can be said to hunger after righteousness.

But further—even in our virtues, there is great reason for us to be on our guard against self-delusion. We attain some one Christian excellence, and then, intoxicated with spiritual pride,

we think ourselves entitled to the favour of God. But the favour of God is not to be purchased at this easy rate. Perhaps you were led to this solitary virtue by some happy constitution of your nature—perhaps you have not been placed in a situation, where you were violently tempted to omit the practice of it—or in practising it, you were influenced by other motives than those of religion—you found some worldly advantage immediately connected with your duty—and you regarded the praise of men even more than the approbation of God.

Granting, however, that none of these defects can be justly imputed to you, where do you read that the doors of Heaven will be opened to you for *one* virtue? It is in this rigorous manner, therefore, that you must examine your consciences, before you can pronounce yourselves in the number of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. You never violated the laws of your country, but have been just in your dealings. True, and so far you are praiseworthy. But have you also visited the sick, clothed the naked, and comforted the afflicted? You have abstained from all gross acts of lewdness and intemperance; but have you been candid, and tender to the reputations of your neighbours—have you been more ready to prevent than to punish crimes—and have you been always willing to put a kind construction on those frailties, to which, God knows, the best of us are subject?

Think not that bare justice will save you in the presence of that God who bids you exercise mercy; and depend upon it, the follies and indiscretions,

and even accidental vices of the young and giddy are less offensive, in his sight, than the severe and censorious spirit in which many persons indulge themselves, without any consciousness of displeasing God, and without any concern for the injury they may do their fellow creatures. We must, therefore, add to our faith temperance, and to our temperance charity; we must grow in grace; we must go on from strength to strength, if we seriously hunger and thirst after righteousness—if we expect to be filled with that joy and assurance of heart with which true religion inspires her followers, even in this world—or if we look forward to those more sublime pleasures which are reserved for those partakers in the reward of their Master, who hunger and thirst no more—for the lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, doth feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters.

Having condemned the extreme of inattention and inconstancy, I must now caution you against the opposite faults, of which we are guilty, in the pursuit of righteousness. The desire, though keen, is in well-founded and well disciplined minds, regular—it increases, but without violence — and it perseveres, but without ostentation. Now the conduct of many, who suppose themselves righteous, is very different; and though the excess of the desire be in the mind, like hunger in the body, an effect and indication of disease, it is ascribed by our self deceit to other and better causes. You are seized by some momentary fit of devotion — you are transported by the frantic ecstacies of fanaticism. After your

escape from some threatening danger, or your recovery from some acute disease, you experience a seriousness, hitherto unknown, which soon spends its force, and leaves you gradually to relapse into your former habits of vice, and your former levity of disposition. You are exact, it may be, in observing all the stated seasons of public worship—you catch greedily at every novel doctrine—or you exult in hearing and learning some new form of devotion—but if you do not persist in serving God—if you do not throw a rein on the fury of your appetites—if you do not bridle the impetuosity of your tongue, and correct the malignity of your hearts, then is your religion vain. Splendid it may appear to others—in your own estimation it may be highly meritorious; but in the sight of God it is imperfect, unsound, and unavailing. Righteousness therefore includes a constant and earnest regard in all our actions, in all situations, to the love of man as well as the love of God—to the rectitude of our habits as well as the purity of our principles. The haven of happiness is open before you; and it is to be reached not by sudden squalls, which may throw you out of your course — not by boisterous tempests, which may drive you on the quicksands of despair or temptation—but by a strong and steady gale, which leaves you at liberty to see and to shun every surrounding danger—which encourages you to go forward with extraordinary success — which enables you to advance without stubborn obstructions from without, or frivolous delays from within—without relaxation and without rashness.

To conclude — The completion of our Lord's blessing, that we shall be filled, is reserved to another life, and thus far it well justifies our endeavour to attain it. For he that sets his affections on things below, will find them perishable and unsatisfactory —often obtained when they are no longer desired, or desired where they cannot be obtained—seldom laudable in the pursuit, and yet more rarely permanent in the enjoyment. But the things which are above cannot be wrested from us by external causes, and they will present gratifications perfectly proportionate to our most refined and elevated capacities of happiness. Whatever good we may have renounced—whatever evil we may have undergone to attain them, will be remembered with triumph; and all the painful sensations of our hunger and thirst after righteousness will, when we are filled, be experienced no more.

But there is another sense of the words, in which we shall be blessed even upon earth, for the reality of which we may appeal, not only to the promise of our Redeemer, but to the dictates of our own experience. I mean this—in a virtuous course of actions, the desire itself will be a part of our enjoyment. Know you not, that in pursuing any worldly aim, that is not absolutely criminal, you find a great pleasure in contemplating the object—in observing the approaches you make to it—in calculating the means that are requisite to gain it — and in anticipating the fuller satisfaction you are to enjoy, when it is gained? From the same principle of the human mind, the love of virtue itself, when it is

sincere—when it is fervent—when it is active, will be a perpetual source of self-approbation to those who cultivate it. Every new conquest gained over your passions—every new habit acquired of religion—every new resolution you form and prosecute to promote your eternal happiness, will add to your peace, and stimulate those holy desires which sudden and temporary gratification is unable to satisfy.

And here it is, that the superiority of our religious affections appears in its brightest colours. They resemble indeed habits, which, like others, are strengthened by time; for, surely, if vice clings to us more closely from repeated use, it is no less the property of virtue to become more easy, and more delightful from the same cause; and even to be desired more eagerly, as it is longer practised. The intemperate and sensual man perseveres in his ungodly course of excess and of lewdness more and more deeply, even when they have ceased to please him, and when the keenness of his appetites is blunted. The penurious and insatiable miser amasses treasures, which he cannot use; and though he finds an increase of pain rather than pleasure from his ruling passion, he persists in gratifying them, and in seeking new occasions of disquietude and vexation. But the religious man finds a repast yet more and more delicious. His desires are quickened by the recurrence of enjoyments which are more exquisite, as they are more frequent. Time cannot weaken them; disappointment cannot embitter them. They attend him when he goeth out and cometh in—in solitude—in society—in the

business of the day — and in the stillness of the night. They sweeten the cheerful hours of his youth, —they soften the pains of increasing age — they will not desert him in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment they will be renewed, confirmed, and invigorated.

# SERMON XLVII.*

LIVE PEACEABLY WITH ALL MEN.

ROMANS xii. 18.

*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men.*

BENEVOLENCE is the great principle on which Christianity is founded; and it tends equally to the honour of religion, and the advantage of society, that Christ exacts from his disciples in their conduct towards each other the same illustrious quality that was displayed on the part of God in the redemption of mankind. The impetuosity of wrath, the bitterness of evil-speaking, and the cruelty of revenge, are peremptorily forbidden in every page of the Gospel. That man is there pointed out by the Sacred writers as the most acceptable servant of Christ, who cultivates a large and generous love towards his fellow-creatures—who seeks for opportunities of doing them good—who diligently retreats from every temptation to injure them—and who, by a happy union of prudence with good-nature, lives peaceably with all men.

The advice contained in my text was doubtless peculiarly proper for St. Paul to give, and for the Romans to follow. For about the time, in which

* 1778.

the Epistle was written, Claudius, in the insolent and unrelenting rigour of despotism, had banished the Jews from Rome; and as the Christians were unfortunately confounded in name with the Jews, they bore no inconsiderable part of all the odium that people had incurred, and of all the punishment they were then doomed to undergo.

In this trying situation, it was not unlikely that the Roman Converts, who had committed no crime, and who intended no offence, should harbour strong resentments against their merciless persecutors. In vindicating their own innocence, they might have attacked with excessive severity the misconduct of their enemies; in defending the true religion they might be hurried into indecent and intemperate invectives against the advocates of the false; and thus, by perpetuating strife—I mean by perpetuating it unnecessarily, and therefore criminally—they might have brought destruction upon themselves, and disgrace upon their cause. Indeed with what colour of propriety could they call themselves the disciples of the meek and benevolent Jesus, who eagerly entered the lists of debate, in defence it may be of some frivolous speculation, or some minute ceremony? With what prospect of success could they undertake to reform the excesses of the world, when the first appeal that was made from their words to their actions must have ended in the most disgraceful condemnation—when their words breathed only peace and brotherly love, and their actions were marked by the most pointed acrimony.

To prevent these mischievous effects, to restrain the zeal, and to assuage, not the unprovoked, but the unbecoming anger of his followers, St. Paul instructs them to have some respect for human opinion, and to pay some attention to the course of human events, even in the mode of their obedience to the divine will—to temporize, but without insincerity—to be submissive, but without pusillanimity—to be exemplary, but without singularity—and, consequently, to recommend virtue by the attraction of every exterior excellence, that neither weakened its intrinsic solidity, nor debased its native purity.

Hence in the verse preceding my text, he directs the Roman Converts to provide things honorable before men, as well as acceptable to God. Consistently with the same rule, and in subservience to the same end, he, in the words of my text, instructs them to preserve peace with the world, unless the higher and more sacred obligations of religion evidently called them into open warfare. Summoned as they were to a station, where every active and every passive virtue was called forth into exercise, he exhorts them not only to deserve kind treatment, but to bear with such as was unkind—to furnish no occasion for just reproaches—to endure such as were unjust—to be on their guard against the designing—to soothe the captious—and, in short, to forgive every seeming affront, and if it were practicable, every real injury.

The most inattentive reader must, I think, be forcibly impressed with that ardour of expostulation, which glows in my text; and I hope not to

do any injustice to the meaning of St. Paul, by this short and plain explanation of the terms contained in it. The injunction then is concise and peremptory; and from the expression itself, as well as the context, it leads us not to hasty, accidental, occasional acts, but to general habits founded upon settled conviction, and invigorated by frequent exercise. Live peaceably, or, as it should be translated with reference to a foregoing word, the force of which pervades many of the surrounding precepts—become indiscriminately and permanently peaceable —γινεσθε ειρηνευοντες. The obligation to practise it co-extends with the utmost external possibility of every case—*if it be possible, live peaceably.* The degrees of practising it are to be measured by the utmost interior capacity of the agent himself—*as much as lieth in you live peaceably.* The objects, you will observe, are not limited by any local or temporary considerations—by any accidental distinctions of religious or political opinion. They were to be found not only among the virtuous believers, but the stubborn Jew, and the contentious Gentile—*live peaceably with all men.* In the nature of things, the occasions of strife were more likely to be furnished by the enemies than by the friends of Christianity. In fact the precept itself had a more immediate reference to the former; and therefore with consummate propriety St. Paul more strenuously inculcates the necessity of living peaceably amidst those critical circumstances, where the temptations to an unpeaceable behaviour were more numerous and more urgent.

The more pious and benevolent among my hearers will, I am sure, concur with me in wishing that the followers of St. Paul were not entirely insensible to the justness of his admonitions, and to the force of his example. But whatever influence they may have had, or not had, on the Romans, the authority of St. Paul's advice extends to Christians of all ages, and the happiest consequences may be expected from the observance of it in every station of life. Even the lustre of a crown is obscured in the dark and stormy scenes of discord; and as to the comforts which attend the more humble ranks of life, they can have no place, where the hostile passions are agitated—where the love of our neighbour is exchanged for hatred, and the calmness of peace is banished by the tumults of dissension. That a quiet and merciful temper is most lovely in itself, and most beneficial in its effects —that it multiplies our friends, and soothes our enemies, is universally acknowledged. It is acknowledged even by those whose disposition is most malevolent, and whose behaviour is most brutal. For they always profess at least their wishes to be at peace with the world, and those wishes would be realized too, could the world be prevailed upon to comply with the harsh conditions which they impose.

In the further prosecution of my subject, I shall first consider the utility of a conscientious and steady obedience to the Apostle's precept; and secondly, I shall point out the methods by which we may be secured from offending against the spirit of it, when to live peaceably is no longer possible on

the principles of self-preservation, and no longer proper on those of duty.

The religious and social obligations of mankind are indissolubly linked together, whatever be the rude efforts of the enthusiast to tear them asunder, or whatever the insidious designs of the infidel, when he represents them as actually separated. For this reason, the precept of St. Paul, to live peaceably, will be found to preserve, not endanger the happiness of the world—to correct the malignity of our worse affections—to open a wider sphere for the activity of the better—and conduct us into that just medium, which lies between the servility of abject submission, and the fury of blind and undistinguishing contention. To establish the truth of this observation, I would carry you to the real and obvious events of common life. In the execution of every task, in the endurance of every calamitous event, nay in the enjoyment of every prosperous one, the assistance of man is necessary to man. There are offices on which our felicity depends, not for its continuance merely, but for its very existence. Those offices can be performed only by those who are actuated by motives of good-will towards us; and therefore it appears from the original constitution of our nature, as well as the artificial obligations of society, that a state of peace is the proper state of a rational and moral agent. In reality his reason is never exercised more usefully than in his efforts to recover or preserve such a state; and his morals are advanced to the highest excellence, when they are attended by those habits, and those princi-

ples, which are conducive to it. When, therefore, we bear a brotherly love, one towards another, we perform indeed, our duty as Christians, but we are at the same time performing our welfare as men; and if nominal Christians do not entertain and cherish sentiments of universal benevolence—if they never bear with the infirmities of their weaker brother, nor forgive the insults of the quarrelsome, they are as unfit for this world, as they are unworthy of a better; and they act in direct opposition both to the positive commands of religion, and the finest sensibilities of the human heart.

It is, therefore, proper to live peaceably; but it is difficult For, I fear, my brethren, that on casting your eyes around you, the most melancholy and painful prospects present themselves. It is true, in the precepts of the Gospel, in the life of its blessed author, you see the most exalted and unbounded charity; but in the world, alas, you see variance and wrath — variance that cannot be reconciled, and wrath that will not be appeased—fraud counterworking fraud, and violence repelling violence. You see the point of honor transferred from the conquest of our most ferocious passions, to the most unbridled and undistinguishing gratification of them. Instead of harmony and mutual confidence, you see some men contriving to ensnare those against whom they have ill-will, and others striving with unremitted toil to destroy them. You see each party acting as if the very business of life were to do the most effectual and most extensive mischief; and as if the highest good fortune

were first to provoke an adversary, and then to harrass him—to contend and to promote contention, and to live wickedly, for the mere sake of not living peaceably. Placed in this deceitful and restless state, each of you, however mild and however cautious, however correct be your judgment, and however steady your resolves, has some share in the miseries, that take their rise from discord. Your good actions are depreciated by some—others are eager to divulge and exaggerate what you have done amiss—your friends are either peevish and disgust you—or they are capricious, and desert you—or they are treacherous, and oppose you. Your enemies lie in wait to seize every opportunity of blasting your well-earned reputation, and counteracting your honest endeavours. You are disappointed in your attempts to conciliate the regard of your inveterate foes, and you unfortunately create more without any evil design, or even with the purest and most meritorious views. While religion is the constant and sole guide of your actions, you meet with ill-treatment from men of the most opposite persuasions, who agree in nothing else but their determination to disagree with you, and who are impatient to destroy that serenity of mind, and that dignity of character in others, which themselves cannot attain. By the libertine the purity of your manners will be imputed to affected singularity, or mean hypocrisy; and at the same time your harmless relaxations will be misconstrued by the fanatic into licentious indulgences. The infidel will charge credulity on your rational belief; while your no less rational scruples

are received by the dogmatist in the odious light of scepticism. The bigot will ascribe your candour to a wavering and inconstant mind; and the zealot will resolve your charity into a concealed indifference towards all religion.

Amidst this conflict of jarring opinions, this variety of captious humours, it is not very easy to live peaceably with the world, to quell the sudden and impetuous risings of passion, to bear the stroke of injustice without lifting up your hands against him that arms it, and to keep silence from reproachful language, while your reputation is rudely attacked. Difficult indeed must always be your compliance with the Apostle's injunction; and yet perhaps the neglect of it is likely on the other hand, to involve you in greater difficulties. He that suffers his temper to be ruffled with every idle rumour, or every trifling indignity, must hold his peace on a very precarious, as well as dishonourable tenure. Nor can that man have much reason to applaud himself for the elevation of his mind, whom the petulant and censorious can at will shake from the basis on which religion ought to fix him, and debase almost to a level with themselves. Retaliation, however just, if it does not terrify the offender, always exasperates him; and then as every new injury excites new resentment, provocations are multiplied on each side in endless succession. The malicious, who would be mortified by your contempt, or disappointed by your insensibility, or propitiated by your forbearance, will find in your resistance, new incentives to malice. While

therefore, religion tells you that acquiescence is usually more becoming than retaliation, experience also will inform you that it is often more successful. I do not, however, suppose the Apostle to recommend forbearance without limitation, and without distinction. On the contrary, I know that in the course of human affairs, some cases will start up, where you may with innocence, as well as advantage, pursue a different conduct. We have the authority of Christ for asserting, that the harmlessness of doves is not incompatible with the wisdom of the serpent. In truth, by the permission of the Gospel it safely may, as by the constitution of the world it unavoidably must, be left to the well disposed and well informed Christian to determine where he must sustain the assault with patience—where he may escape by prudence—and where he may repel it by resolution.

The text itself, by implication, supposes the possibility of our being involved in circumstances where it is impossible for us to keep peace; and while it expressly commands us to avoid all occasions of strife, it indirectly suggests such instructions as convey the spirit of Christian charity to those actions, by which evil is averted, or retorted. In what degree overt acts of positive opposition are consistent with the Apostle's admonition to live peaceably, when we can resist man without offending God, is not a question of barren speculation. The tranquillity of those sincere Christians, whose delicacy of feeling makes them shudder at every supposed deviation from the line of duty—nay, the

innocence of all Christians in the daily intercourse of life are materially interested in it. I therefore proceed, secondly, to point out the methods by which we may comply with the precept of the text. For unprovoked, and unpremeditated acts of enmity—for the wanton and outrageous violence of him who voluntarily exchanges a state of concord for that of hostility—no plea can be offered. But do not deceive yourselves, nor imagine that you are quite unconcerned in St. Paul's admonition because you have not violated it under the blackest circumstances of aggravation. Should you be unhappy enough to have received ill-usage from those who, instead of listening to you, when you spake of peace, prepared themselves for the battle, do not be in haste to conclude that no spiritual danger hangs over your heads, or that no contamination of guilt can affect you who are the injured party.

The superiority of the cause by no means proves your ability to manage it with judgment and with moderation; and the very consciousness that your resentment was at first lawful, is too apt to make you forgetful, whether or no, in the progress of the dispute, it be not excessive, and at the end perhaps more unlawful than the original provocation itself. When, therefore, you are dragged by hard and unavoidable necessity into the field of controversy, pause for a moment. Reflect that every step you take is entangled and treacherous ground — that your vigilance and your courage must chiefly be directed against yourselves — and that the consequences of your own passions, when they have

once burst away from the restraints of duty, are far more formidable than the worst of injuries you can suffer from the worst of men. I readily allow, that you have been wronged—that your wishes for peace have been sincerely professed—and your endeavours to keep it repeatedly baffled—yet in seeking redress you have need of the most scrupulous caution, united with the steadiest impartiality. You must separate, with the utmost nicety of discrimination, what the mind almost imperceptibly and invariably confounds—the sudden suggestions of just revenge from the calmer dictates of reason. You must explore the most secret spring of every motive, and the remotest tendency of every measure. You must search deeply into the recesses of your hearts, in order to be sure—sin and misery follow close on all your actions, unless you be sure—that no malignity is rankling within your bosom—that you have no pleasure in retorting pain on him that has inflicted it—and that you would gladly prefer reconciliation to the slightest revenge. In protecting your own rights, you must not harass those who would invade them, beyond the degree that such protection indispensibly and indisputably requires. You must punish, not so much with an invidious retrospect to the past, as in salutary provision for the future; and even in prosecuting a sort of war against your neighbours, your supreme and ultimate object should be to procure a solid and permanent peace with them—to wrest from them the power of disturbing your tranquillity—to fix yourselves in a situation where you shall not be tempted to act

unkindly, because you are not within the reach of unkindness — and where your virtue and your interests will be alike secured.

Christianity does not exact more from you; and most commendable is that man who is able and willing to perform so much. He in truth acts up to the real and full import of the Apostle's injunction. So far as it is possible on those principles of self-defence, which nature has implanted, and which Christianity does not profess to extirpate—so far as it lieth in him, without renouncing the interests of virtue, and the honour of religion, he liveth peaceably with all men. He industriously shuns each occasion of strife. When entangled in unforeseen and unavoidable debates, he brings them to a speedy, and if it lie in him, to an amicable conclusion. In supporting himself, he separates firmness from obstinacy; and in curbing the violence of those around him, he contracts no share of their guilt; for he condemns without malice—he counterplots without perfidy—and he resists without cruelty. By this judicious mixture of moderation and of spirit, he conducts himself with propriety in this world, and prepares himself for a better. That strength, which, if it be lavished on trifles is soon exhausted, without dignity and without use, he keeps in reserve for occasions of real and adequate importance. Firm and collected against every event, he directs all the exertions even of the most opposite powers —his caution and his courage—his forbearance and his opposition, uniformly to one end, and that end he generally obtains; whether it be or be not pos-

sible for him to live peaceably—whether his interests and his duty require him to soften an enemy by concession—or elude him by dexterity — or to crush him by open assault.

After this plain and fair statement of the manner in which a Christian will conduct himself, I will again grapple with the objections which have been stated by different men for different purposes—by the friends of the Gospel, in order to exculpate themselves from disobeying its precepts—and by the enemies of it—in order to insinuate that they cannot be obeyed.

Hitherto I have considered the duty of living peaceably, when we are under the pressure of the heaviest provocations. We shall not, however, take in the whole force, or act up to the real spirit of the precept, unless we attend to the direction it gives us, in the more ordinary and frequent occurrences of human life. It has been observed that, if the mass of human misery were analysed into its parts, we should perceive it chiefly to arise, not from great, but from petty causes — not from the calamities that overwhelm—but from the distresses that vex us — not from an uncontroulable and stubborn order of things, which too often impels us to censure Providence, but from imbecility of understanding and instability of temper—for which we ought only to accuse ourselves. In the same manner, if we were to explore the sources of our disquietude, as springing from the conduct of those with whom we associate, we should find them much oftener in folly than in guilt—in sudden fretfulness than in deliberate aversion — in the irregularity of

mere humour, rather than in rooted malignity of heart. Let us then view the world not upon a large and general scale, where our thoughts are often thrown off from ourselves to others; but through a more confined, and at the same time, more exact medium. We complain that it is out of our power to live peaceably, because we are surrounded by enemies whom we cannot propitiate, and therefore must disarm. But the complaint is rarely founded in fact; and by those, who are most eager to insist upon it, it cannot be proved, when they look at their real actions; and it would not be even believed, if they endeavoured to look at them steadfastly and seriously. We are not under the necessity, every moment, of struggling with competition, or of repelling hostility. To the wiles of the betrayer, or to the lash of the oppressor, we are not in every station exposed. But at every moment, and in every station, we may meet with men whom we call our foes, and who are made such by themselves, or by us, in consequence of peevishness — of indiscretion —of vanity, which aims at superiority in trifles— and of haughtiness, which tramples upon those whom we think our inferiors. How often is the peace of families, and the harmony of a neighbourhood, interrupted by wrongs which he who feels them most keenly is unable to calculate; and which, in the presence of the discerning and impartial, he would blush to mention, at the very instant, when upon the bare recollection of them he is disturbed and exasperated. One contumelious word — one fastidious look — the accidental or de-

signed omission of an idle ceremony—the perverse or wanton opposition that is made to some whimsical opinion—the refusal of one's obstinacy to the demand of another man's pride—these, or occasions such as these, break in upon our repose, arm our resentments with the sharpest sting, and call forth our bitterest accusations against the moral constitution of the world.

Where a real injury has been done to us, it may be ascertained by all parties—it may be acknowledged by him that offered it—and it may be pardoned by him that has suffered. But when we are roused and stung by an offence which perhaps was never intended—when the intention itself was forgotten as soon as it was formed—when "trifles light as air" are considered as proofs—and when facts too inconsiderable to be put into the balance of reason, derive all their weight from the aggravations of fancy, we dare not expose our want of judgment, or our want of forbearance, by calling for an explanation; and yet we try to shelter ourselves from our own contempt by wreaking our most unjust and most intemperate vengeance, upon other men, by whom we suppose ourselves to be contemned. Hence, in consequence of words that were forgotten as soon as uttered, or lamented by him that spoke them, whensoever they were remembered, we brood over the dictates of resentment for days, and months, and years. We impute to settled and determined dislike, what was suggested only at some unlucky moment in the heat of sudden controversy, or from the desire of momentary victory. We shun those whose company we once courted—we become des-

picable from captiousness, lest we should be despised for pusillanimity—we lose sight of the general and solid merit that belongs to our opponent, while we attend only to his particular, and, it may be, imaginary imperfections—we grow more and more insensible to all the accomplishments that charmed us—to all the talents from which we derived instruction—and to all the virtues we had been accustomed to contemplate with love and with admiration. The hand of death, in the mean time, is stretched over the object of our unmerited rage; and though the grave has closed upon him, we take a malignant and a cowardly pleasure in insulting, and in pointing our accusations against his memory—against those frailties, from which the best of men are not always exempt, and which, if we strictly examined the course of our own lives, we might find habitual in ourselves.

Such are the effects of pride among persons the most distinguished by the vigour of their understandings, and the multiplicity of their attainments. And such too are its effects in other classes of men, who, though they put up no pretensions to literary eminence, are yet subject to jealousies, where the credit of their judgment seems to be arraigned—where some darling prejudice is attacked, or some inveterate error detected and refuted. Wheresoever indeed our treasure lies—whether it be in the consequence we derive from the affluence of our fortune or the splendour of superior intellect—from our local power—from our wealth, or our birth, we are unable to live peaceably, when the smallest and the weakest of our claims is disputed in reality, or in appearance.

Of how much importance then is it for us to preserve our tranquillity, our charity, and our true dignity, by controuling that resentment, which, as Bacon says, keeps those wounds green, that otherwise would heal and do well. In the emphatical and characteristic language of the same illustrious writer, I will point out the source of the real evil, and the source too of the only sure and effectual remedy. The evil lies here—"contempt," says he, "is that which putteth an edge upon anger, as much or more than the hurt itself. And therefore, where men are ingenious in picking out circumstances of contempt, they do kindle their anger much." But what, you will say, is the remedy? It is plain, it is practicable, it is almost infallible; and it is thus described: "For appeasing anger," says the same acute observer, "we ought to sever as much as may be the construction of the injury from the point of contempt—imputing it to misunderstanding, fear, passion, or what you will."

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear; let him lay his hand upon his heart, and consider well how often contemptuous designs have been imputed to himself, which he never felt — how often he has rashly supposed, and warmly resented them in other men—how many valuable friendships he, by these means, has lost—how many formidable enmities he has incurred. Let him recollect what days, after he had met with seeming or some trifling indignity, he has passed in anguish—what nights he has worn away in watchfulness—what clouds have overcast his mind in the hour of convivial festivity—and what

storms have assailed him in seasons of solitary contemplation. Let him pause and seriously ask himself, whether the motives or the actions which have given him so much offence, can really subject their authors to the displeasure of his God; and then let him determine how far it becomes a wise and good man to be slack in seeking reconciliation, while he is upon earth, with a fellow-creature, whom, in spite of all the infirmities to which he is or is not subject, and all the affronts he may himself have resented, he cannot deliberately renounce the hope of meeting hereafter in Heaven. Let him weigh well, who is most likely to be excluded thence—himself or the person with whom he is displeased — himself for rancorous and settled malice, or other men for hasty and transient unkindness.

Do you take the alarm at these searching and perhaps unwelcome reflections? However searching they may be, and however unwelcome, I know them to be well-founded, to be well meant, to be most instructive, and to be most important. Instead, therefore, of speaking those smooth things, which flatter your self-conceit, and confirm your self-delusions, I have shewn you for what reasons you do not live peaceably, and by what means you may recover your peace. I have brought the subject of my text home to your business and to your bosoms. I have stript it of the disguise in which general representation might involve it, and I appeal for the truth of my remarks to the particular observation, and the particular experience of every hearer, both high and low, both learned and unlearned.

Already have I summoned your attention to the acute observations of a writer who stood on the highest pinnacle of human wisdom, and who from this eminence surveyed and explored the most hidden recesses of the human mind, and all the minutest variations of external manners. But in the close of the discourse, I will do more. I will now address myself to your consciences, and will set before them not merely the sage advice of a profound philosopher, but the solemn command of an inspired Apostle—live, if it be possible—live, as much as lieth in you, for the sake of your innocence here, and your salvation hereafter, desire without wavering, and strive without ceasing—to live peaceably with all men.

To conclude. No life can be more amiable among men, nor more acceptable to God than that of a mild and humble and long-suffering Christian. He follows the example of Christ, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; and he may lay claim not only to the blessing which our Saviour has pronounced to the meek-spirited, who are to inherit the earth, but to a most ample and glorious reward in Heaven. He obtains, because he deserves, the esteem of the wise, and the friendship of the virtuous. In adversity he is never discontented, and in prosperity never arrogant. He feels the purest and most elevated satisfaction, while it is in his power to live peaceably with all men; and should he be compelled by the stratagems of the cunning or the oppressions of the unjust to act a resolute part in his own vindication, he yet recollects, that final

tranquillity is the end that sanctifies temporary violence; and he keeps so strict a guard over himself as not to utter any calumnious expression, or commit any cruel action. Such a man, on this side of the grave, has many advantages over the quarrelsome and malevolent, against whom the world, which is itself quarrelsome and malignant, always entertains sentiments of distrust and detestation. None but the most shameless and obdurate of mankind are disposed to provoke the benevolent Christian; and he is sure of finding shelter both in the approbation of his own conscience, and in the assistance of those, who set a just value on his upright intentions and peaceable demeanour. A total exemption from ill-treatment he will not expect in this scene of clashing interests and turbulent affections; but he will enjoy dignity of mind, far more respectable and more meritorious than mere inactive tranquillity. He will ultimately convert all the injuries done to him into blessings, because he considers them as trials of his patience and charity, and because, under the severest persecution, he is able to look up with confidence to that God who is his most powerful protector, and most righteous judge.

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# ERRATA.

## VOLUME VI.

Page 15, line 18, *before* yielding, *insert* when.
36, — 3, *for* he had, *read* it has.
69, — ult, *for* ακάτασιας, *read* ἀκαταστασιας.
92, — 20, *for* Bourdelet, *read* Bourdaloue.
269, — 13, *for* wordly, *read* worldly.
304, — 8, *before* every struggle, *insert* and who sees.
382, — 20, and while from, *read* and while we turn from.
340, — 10, *for* to be a man, *read* to be men.
370, — 23, *for* to love of God, *read* to love God.
380, — 19, *for* preserved, *read* perceived.
383, — 13, *for* when, *read* as when.
389, — 21, *before* in course, *insert* indulging.
412, — 21 *note*, *for* illi, *read* ille.
414, — 19 *note*, *for* καικα θαρωτερου, *read* και καθαρώτερου.
418, — 15, *after* traced, *add* them.
424, — 5, *for* are, *read* were.
451, — 12, *for* you, *read* your.
464, — 3, *for* receives, *read* receive.
466, *note*, *before* 1789, *read* Birmingham charity schools.
501, — 1, *for* attendence, *read* attendants.
569, — 10, *for* malevolence and selfishness, *read* malevolence, and selfish.
575, — 6, *for* wise, *read* wiser.
579, — 22, *dele* the mark of interrogation after advantages.
616, — 19, *after* explain, *dele* them.
629, — 6, *after* future, *add* state.
631, — 14, *for* was, *read* were.
ibid. — 19, *after* directions, place a comma, and dele the comma after extremities.
653, — 9, *for* eighth, *read* twenty-ninth.
655, — 9, *for* has, *read* have.
661, — 1, *for* et, *read* let.
663, — 21, *for* of countrymen, *read* of his countrymen.
694, — 4, *for* ocasions, *read* occasions.
696, — 13, *after* much, place a full stop and dele the mark of interrogation.

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